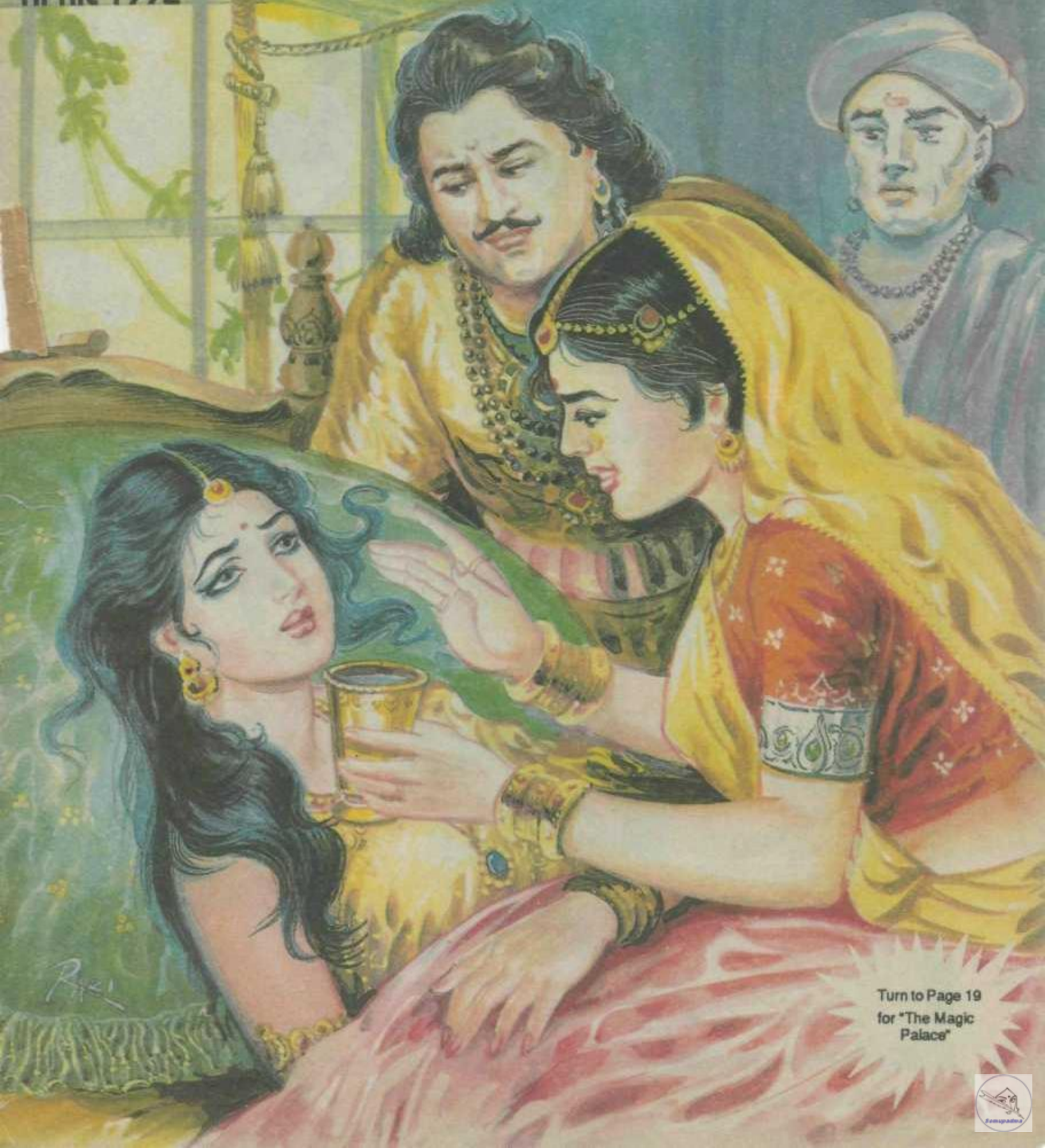


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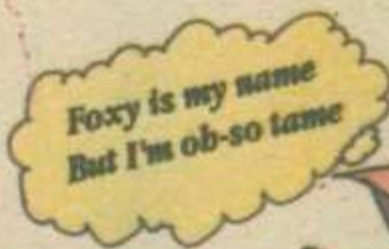
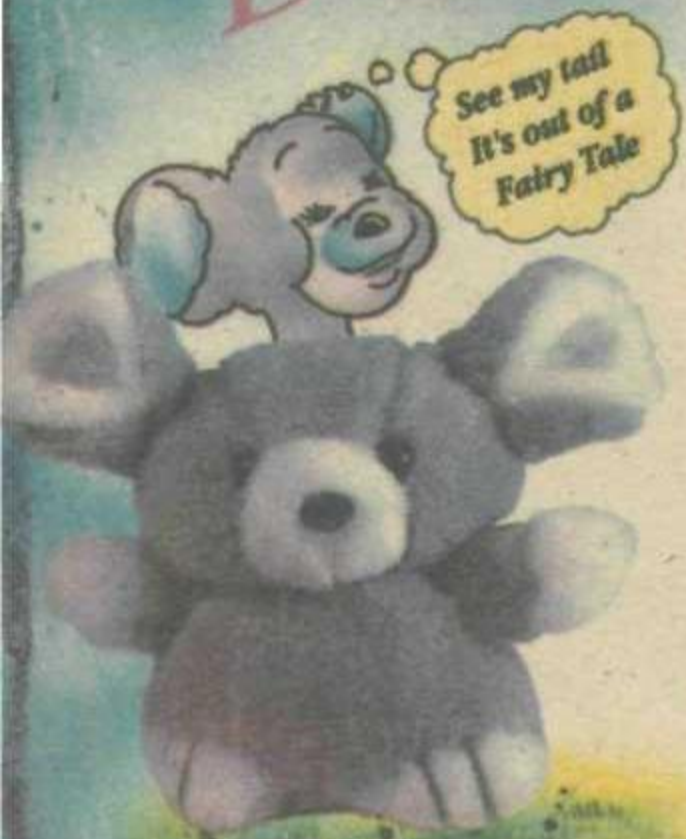
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IN THIS ISSUE

Vol. 22 APRIL 1992 No.10

Stories:

His Birth Mark	... Page 12
The Magic Palace - 1	... Page 19
Lal the Lazy	... Page 27
The Czar And The Braggart	... Page 37
A Change of Heart	... Page 41
Veer Hanuman - 19	... Page 49
Reward For Courage	... Page 57
Dilemma From Dates	... Page 58
Orders Are Orders	... Page 61
The Four Poets	... Page 62

Picture Stories:

Panchatantra - 16	... Page 14
Earnings From An Epitaph	... Page 47

Features:

Peace In Salvador	... Page 10
World Of Sport	... Page 13
Supplement - 42	... Page 33
World Of Nature	... Page 48

**And News Flash, Let Us Know
and More!**

NEXT ISSUE

VOL. 22 MAY 1992 NO. 11

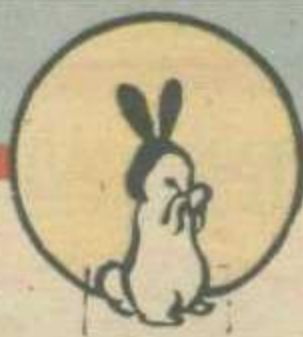
THE MAGIC PALACE: As advised by the Raj Jyotishi, Princess Vidyavati is shifted to the lake palace to spend her bad period. King Veerasen and Queen Vajreswari find it difficult to bear the separation. They visit their daughter on the dates suggested by the Jyotishi. As another propitious date may not come up for a month or two, they go for the third time early one morning to be greeted by a dazed maid. The princess is missing! **VEER HANUMAN:** Ravana's brother, Vibhishana, after leaving Lanka in disgust, approaches Rama for protection. Sugriva is averse to the idea of befriending him, but Hanuman feels that anyone who seeks help should not be dismissed outright. Rama agrees to this viewpoint. Vibhishana gives them directions to reach Lanka. Meanwhile, Ravana sends Suka as an emissary to Sugriva.

ALSO all the regular features including **SUPPLEMENT** and **PANCHATANTRA**.

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Sharing One's Knowledge

Many of you must have completed your annual exam, while others are still writing it and eagerly looking forward to enjoying a well-earned rest and holiday. Isn't time one looked back and thought of the role of education in one's life?

Is education merely confined to the passing of examinations, securing degrees and, with the help of degrees, getting into jobs, and settling down happily and satisfactorily, without caring for the people around?

Must not education also include a concern for life, all life for that matter, including people less fortunate than yourself, like the poor and the sorrowing, the sick and the handicapped? Has education taught you to share your joys with them, your good fortune with them?

This is not to say, we are oblivious of or blind to what is happening around us. We do act with a sense of urgency whenever we are deeply moved. But do we have to wait for occasions like that to rise from our slumber?

We see so much of suffering around us, yet we tend to take it for granted. We may even turn our head away from poverty and suffering. Education has a role bigger than and beyond syllabuses and curriculum. When we are young, our education should help us cultivate a concern for society and the many ills that dog society.

Many of these ills can be wiped out if only we develop a feeling of sharing all that we possess or at least a part of it and at the same time enjoy such sharing. In sharing knowledge that we have gained from education, we do not lose anything. Knowledge only gets enriched from the experience of the beneficiaries.

Let's make a beginning.

PEACE IN SALVADOR

When a civil war ends and peace returns to the country, it is time to rejoice and celebrate, isn't it?

This is what has happened in the Central American republic of El Salvador, where the military dominated government and the leftist guerillas had been at war with each other for the last 12 years, resulting in the loss of more than 75,000 lives.

Some 450 years ago, the Aztec population was conquered by settlers from Spain. The Spanish rule was overthrown during the first decades of the 19th century, resulting in the formation of the Central American Federation in 1823 along with states like Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica.

The Federation lasted only 15 years, and three years after its dissolution in 1838, El Salvador became an independent republic.



The main occupation of the people was agriculture, but most of the cultivated land was in the hands of wealthy families who collected rent from the farmers.

A hundred years of independent rule witnessed a lot of movement among the population, with thousands of Salvadoreans emigrating to Honduras. This resulted in tension between the two countries, ending in warfare soon after the Honduras team suffered a defeat by Salvador in the 1970 World Cup Football!

In 1972, Gen. Carlos Romero was elected President. But his repressive rule caused considerable internal unrest, and saw the formation of guerilla groups, who began indulging in kidnappings, shootings, and assassinations. Nations of the world sat up when Oscar Romero, the popular archbishop of San Salvador, the

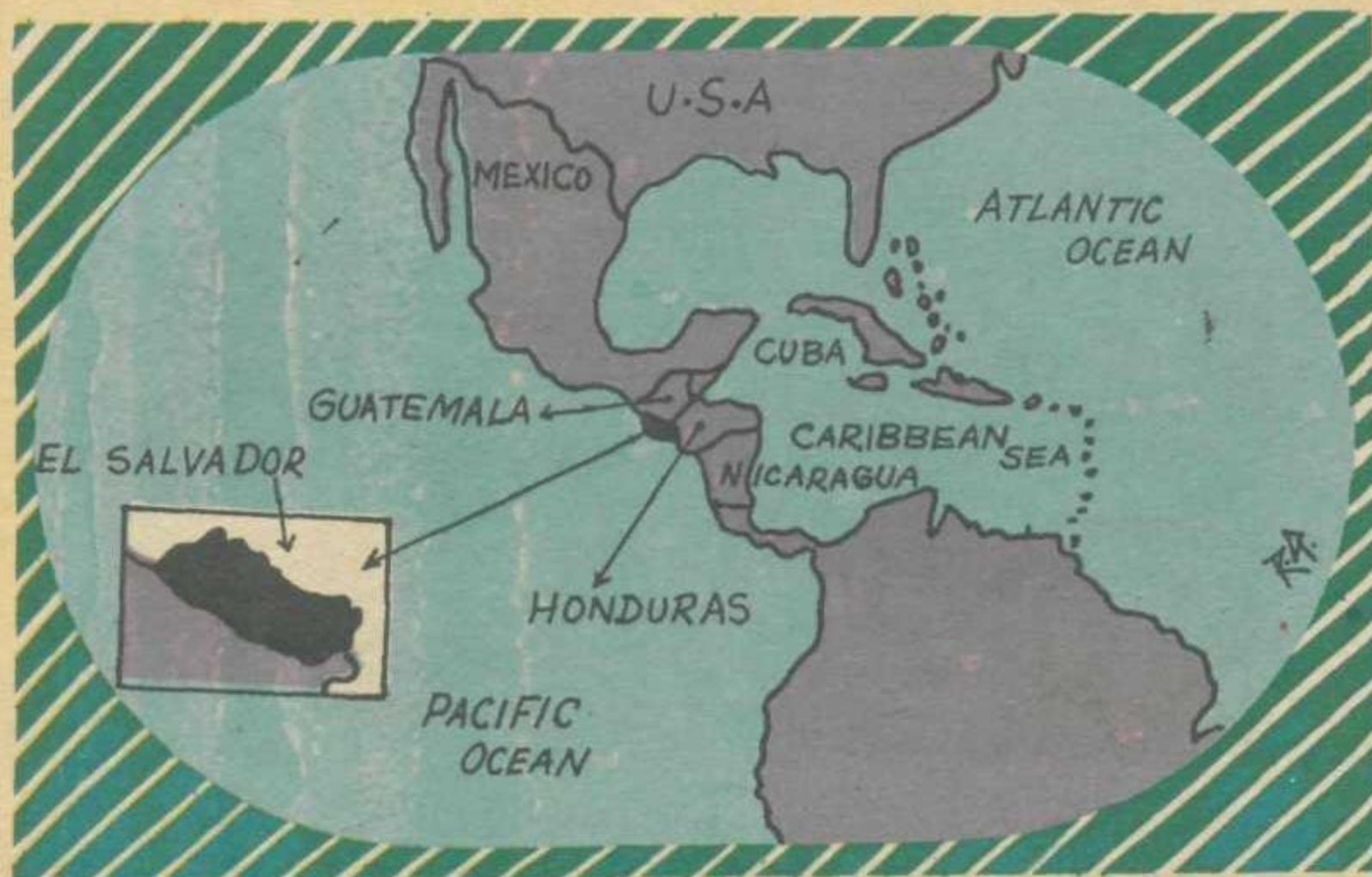
capital, was assassinated in 1980. That marked the beginning of a civil war.

The same year, Jose Duarte became President, but he could not succeed in bringing about all the economic and other reforms he had promised. He was suffering from cancer, and this prompted the return of violence. On his resignation, Alfredo Cristiani was elected President in 1989. At his instance, the United Nations started peace negotiations which, after more than two years, have borne fruit.

The Salvador government, on January 16, signed a pact with the

leftist Farabundo Marti Nation Liberation Front (FLMN) rebels ushering in an era of long-sought peace. The pact came into effect on February 1. "The long night of El Salvador is ending," remarked the U.N. Secretary General, Dr. Boutros Ghali, just before the signing.

The pact will lead to dismantling of the guerilla forces, reduction in the size of the army, land reform, and reforms in the judicial and electoral systems. When the rebels flew back home from Mexico, they received a jubilant welcome. The government leaders addressed them as "our countrymen"



His Birth Mark

King Krishna Deva had a black spot on his right hand right from birth. He had taken it as a good sign. Some astrologers in the kingdom came to know of it and they would, under one pretext or another, visit him and impress upon him that he remained king because of his birth mark. This made Krishna Deva very happy and he showered them with gifts and rewards. His minister, Deva Gowda, could see through their game and pitied the king.

One day, an astrologer from a neighbouring kingdom was passing that way and, having heard of Krishna Deva's unique birth mark, wished to see it and study it. The king received him with due reverence. When he was told of the astrologer's wish, the king showed him the spot on his right hand. The astrologer studied it for a long while and exclaimed, "Sire, it is true you owe your position to your birth mark. A bigger black spot at the same place on the hand would have made you nothing less than an emperor!"

Deva Gowda knew that the astrologer was trying to flatter the king for favours. He called one of the guards at the door and asked him to show his right hand to the king and the astrologer. They saw he had a bigger black spot.

The astrologer's face fell in shame. The king had no more blind faith in astrologers.



Youngest

Cricket-lovers in India received a shock the other day when they heard of the untimely death of young Dhruve Pandove in a road accident. This left-handed opening batsman of Punjab had only recently attained the distinction of being the youngest (less than 18) player to complete 1,000 runs in Ranji Championship matches. On December 16 last, he scored 170 runs in the last league match against Services in Amristar. His earlier achievements were scoring 50 and 100 in the national championship at the youngest age.



For your Record Book

Ynna Yevseyeva of Ukraine ran the Women's indoor 1,000m in 2m 33.93 sec. in Moscow on Feb. 7, beating the earlier record of 2:34.80 set by Brigitte Kraus of Germany in February 1978.

England wicketkeeper, Lisa Nye (25), authored 8 dismissals in a single innings in women's Test cricket. She achieved her feat on Feb. 12, the opening day of the third and final Test between England and New Zealand in New Plymouth, New Zealand. The six catches and two stumpings she made beat the current record of seven dismissals in men's Test cricket.

Another Youngest

He is Toni Nieminen of Finland. He created Olympic history in February, when he became the youngest (16 years) gold medallist in ski-jumping. This baby-faced school boy pulled out the biggest jump, in the second round, landing 122 metres away from the ramp. In the first round, he had made the second longest jump. The event took place in Albertville where the Winter Olympics was held as the precursor to the Summer Olympics in Barcelona next July-August.





आरभन्तेऽल्पमेवाज्ञाः कामं व्यग्रा भवन्ति च ।
महारम्भाः कृतधियस्तिष्ठन्ति च निराकुलाः ॥



The weak-minded gets upset even at the beginning of a small enterprise. But the courageous remain calm even when undertaking to perform a great task.

THE FRIENDS CLIMB THE MOUNTAIN.



LET'S TRY OUR LUCK!

AFTER SOMETIME...

COME HERE, COME, LOOK!



WE'RE LUCKY TO FIND THESE GEMS. LET'S GO NOW!



NO, WAIT A MINUTE.

WHY?



WE'VE TO GO THROUGH THE FOREST WHERE ROBBERS ABOUND. HOW DO WE HIDE THE GEMS.



DON'T WORRY. I'VE AN IDEA. LET'S SWALLOW THEM SO THAT NOBODY CAN FIND THEM.



EXCELLENT IDEA! LET'S DO THAT!



MEANWHILE A TRAMP...



HAI HA HAI THEY'RE SWALLOWING THE GEMS, THINKING THEY'RE SECURE. AHA! AHA!

I SHALL FOLLOW THEM. WHEN THEY FALL ASLEEP, I SHALL CUT OPEN THEIR STOMACH AND TAKE AWAY THE GEMS.



AFTER SOME TIME...

O TRAVELLERS! PLEASE LET ME GO WITH YOU.



उत्तमः क्लेशविक्षोभं क्षमः सोढुं न हीतरः ।
मणिरेव महाशाणघर्षणं न तु मृत्कणः ॥

THEY WAIT FOR HIM...

I'VE LOST MY WAY...

ALL RIGHT. COME WITH US



SOMETIME LATER, THE PRINCE AND HIS FRIENDS ENTER A DEEP FOREST...



STOP! DON'T MOVE.

MY GOD! ROBBERS!

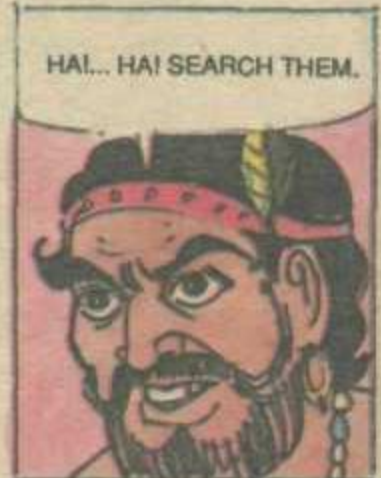
HAND OVER ALL VALUABLES YOU'VE WITH YOU! QUICK!



WE DON'T HAVE ANY. LEAVE US!



HAI... HAI SEARCH THEM.



AFTER SOME TIME... MASTER! THERE'S NOTHING ON THEM.

THEY CAN GO NOW.



MY GOD! WE'RE SAVED!



NO MASTER! DON'T LEAVE THEM. THEY'VE GEMS WITH THEM.



TO CONTINUE

It is only the best among men that can stand the attack of sorrows and suffering, not the ordinary people. It is only the gem which can stand the rubbing on a grindstone, not a clod of earth.

TOWARDS BETTER ENGLISH

NATIONS ARE PERSONIFIED THUS!

"Oh! He's the old man of the sea!" said his friend to U.Jagdeesh of Kumool, referring to a certain acquaintance of theirs, about whom Jagdeesh had some reservation. But, as far as he knew, that man had nothing to do with the sea. Certainly he was not a fisherman, if his friend was trying to identify him as one. What Jagdeesh did not immediately realise was, his friend meant the acquaintance was a sort of bore, or pest, or an evil spirit like, probably, that infamous character in *Sinbad the Sailor*, called incubus, who plagues Sinbad throughout the story and is frequently referred to as "the old man of the sea".

S. Ramesh Kumar of Ludhiana has often come across expressions like 'John Bull' and 'Uncle Sam' in references to England and the U.S.A. Who are they? he wonders. John Bull was the creation of John Arbuthnot (1667-1735), a Scottish physician attending on Queen Anne. He wrote *The History of John Bull* in 1712, in which he made John Bull, a typical Englishman, the personification of England. John Bull was pictured as a stoutish red-faced farmer, wearing a top hat and high boots. Subsequently, this character was popularly used by cartoonists to represent the English nation. Uncle Sam was the nickname given to the U.S. Government. It originated during the 1812-14 war with England. All government property carried the initials U.S. to which someone gave a fanciful expansion Uncle Sam!





Everywhere in Veergiri, there was only excitement. People talked of Princess Vidyavati's birthday and nothing else. The capital was getting spruced up, although the birthday celebrations were three weeks away. The tree-lined streets were being cleaned twice a day. Arches and buntings came up all along the procession route. The celebra-

tions generally concluded with a procession in the evening when the princess, accompanied by her friends, visited the Devi temple to offer worship and later went in a procession along the main streets before returning to the palace. All the houses on these streets received a fresh coat of paint, and the people living there took special pains to decorate the

The Jyotishi's Decree



walls and the gates and keep the place bright-looking.

As they were giving finishing touches came the announcement, all of a sudden, that all celebrations had been cancelled, as the princess had taken ill, that she was not responding to treatment, and there was no likelihood of her visiting the temple or going round the capital. The people of Veergiri were in a state of shock.

King Veerasen and Queen Vajreswari were disappointed just as their subjects were. They were also distressed, as their only daughter had till then not fallen ill like that. Three days ago she

was unable to get up from bed, saying she was feeling very tired. Shalini, the maid-in-waiting, tried to help her on to her feet, which gave way the moment she stood up, and she saved herself by falling into the bed. She did not get up after that.

Queen Vajreswari was informed and she rushed into the princess's chambers and was horrified to see her daughter looking so pale and wane. Word was immediately sent to the king. One look at Vidyavati, and he knew there was something serious with her. He asked the attendants to go and fetch the Raj Vaidya. The royal physician examined her thoroughly and was baffled. Everything appeared normal, yet the princess was unable to get up from bed. He told King Veerasen that he would not give her any medicines right away but would observe her for one or two days for some clearer symptoms to decide what medicines he should prescribe. Meanwhile, she should take complete rest and should not be compelled to eat if she did not wish to.

The queen remained with



Vidyavati throughout that day watching her every movement. Fortunately, the princess slept all through and woke up only when the Raj Vaidya came back in the evening and asked her how she felt. She was still feeling weak and wished to take only some fruit juice and nothing more.

The next day passed almost like the previous except that, on seeing the princess fast asleep, Queen Vajreswari took time to discuss with her husband the prospect of celebrating Vidyavati's birthday. Veerasen told her he would wait till he met the Raj Vaidya the next day before he took a decision about the festivities.

That night, the queen had a strange experience. It was not a dream, she was sure of that. But, had someone entered the bedroom? she was not quite sure, either. She felt as if a cold hand had touched her, and she woke up suddenly. She *thought* she saw an apparition-like figure going out of the room. It was clad in white, and she could not see its face. Was the apparition that of a woman? A man? But, then, was it an apparition at all? Wasn't it a play of the moonlight? It could



be, the queen presumed and went back to sleep. Again the cold touch! She woke up, but there was no apparition, and there was no moonlight falling through the window. This time she woke up the king who was in deep slumber. "My queen, you must have been dreaming," the king tried to comfort her. "I know you're worried about Vidyavati. She'll be all right, soon. Nothing will happen to her."

"My lord, I'm not quite certain," wailed the queen softly. "I've a feeling that something evil is going to happen to her. I'm really worried about her. I wish it'll be morning soon!"



"Try to get some sleep, my queen," the king prompted her. "Another two hours, and it will then be dawn, and we shall await the Raj Vaidya to give us some hopeful news."

The third day dawned, and there was no appreciable change in Vidyavati's condition. The Raj Vaidya examined her again and said he would send some medicines to give her strength.

The king made the announcement late that evening and the people woke up feeling as if they had lost the very joy of life. The princess, all through her sixteen summers and winters, had endeared herself to her father's

subjects. They would line up the streets to greet her whenever she came out to visit a temple or to call on her friends. They could not believe their ears when they were told that there was little or no chance of her going round the capital in procession on her birthday. This had been an event, full of grandeur, which they waited for every year ever since she was thirteen and was taken in procession. Now what would have happened to their lovely princess all of a sudden? they wondered, and spent sleepless nights till they could receive some re-assuring news of her.

They would gather in groups near the palace gates and whenever they saw an attendant coming out on some errand, they would besiege him for the latest information about the princess.

Days passed. It was the day before the princess's birthday. One of the attendants, who came out of the palace, told the people waiting outside that the king had ordered special prayers to be held in the Devi temple and other temples the next day, and that he himself was on his way to the Raj Jyotishi to fetch him to the palace. No, he assured them, the



princess's condition had not worsened; in fact, there was some improvement and she was now able to sit in her bed.

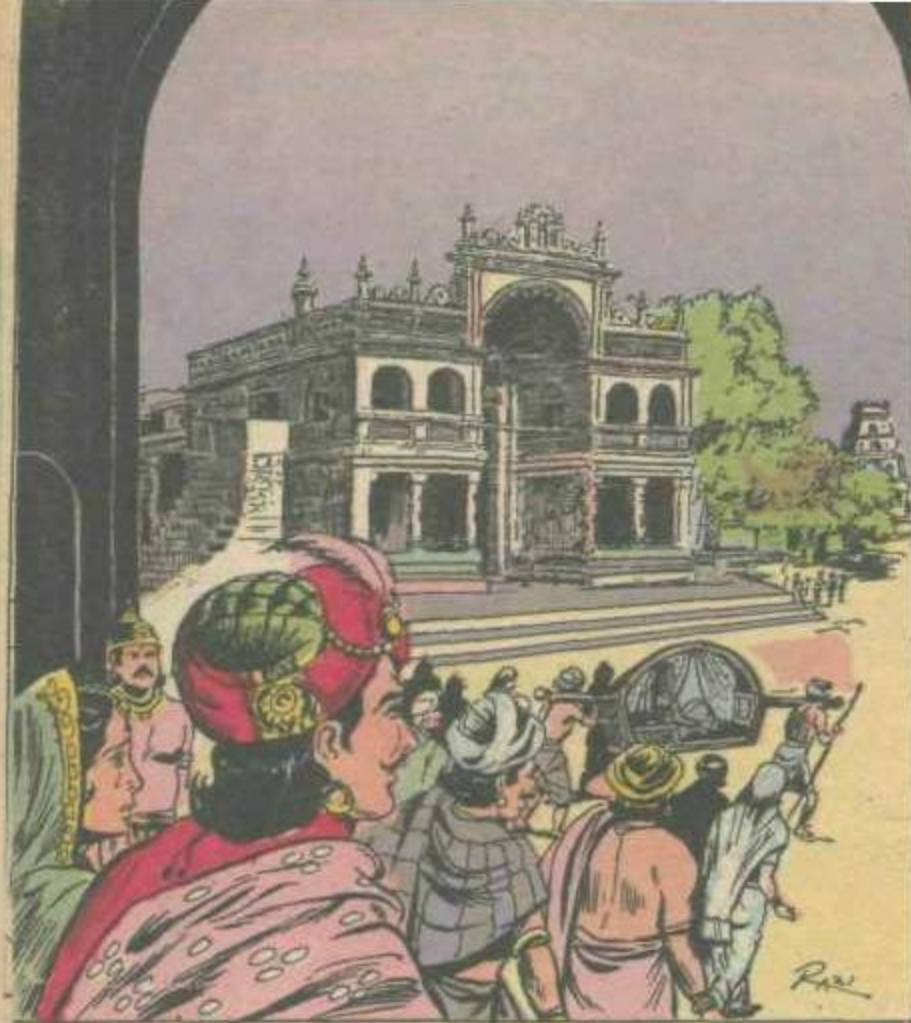
The people heaved a great sigh of relief. The next day, they themselves flocked to the temples and prayed for the princess's early recovery and long life. They were expecting to see the king and queen at the temples, at least one of them, but neither of them came out of the palace. Instead, the people saw the palace attendants carrying *prasad* from the temples to the palace. They were also eager to know what the Raj Jyotishi, Acharya Vachaspati, had to say about the princess's condition and future.

The next day, a lot of news awaited them. As advised by the Jyotishi, Princess Vidyavati had been taken to the king's summer resort on an island in the lake, that the queen's own maid, old Kamala, had gone with her, and that only half-a-dozen other maids would be attending on them. The king and queen had been told that they could themselves visit their daughter only once a month, that too on a day to be decided by the Jyotishi, and that this life of seclusion for the



princess would last eleven months and eleven days, till the malevolent effects of some planets in her horoscope disappeared. The people could now guess why the princess had been taken to the island resort in the dead of night. In their heart of hearts they wished her well. After all, eleven months would pass off quickly and if everything went well with her, they should be able to greet her on her next birthday.

Back at the palace, King Veerasen and Queen Vajreswari were closeted in their chambers recalling the previous day's developments. The moment the Raj Jyotishi saw Vidyavati's horo-



scope, he raised his eyebrows and looked at the king and queen. "Hadh't I warned you of bad days for the princess when I cast her horoscope soon after her birth? Probably....."

"We did not remember it, Jyotishiji," the king completed what the Jyotishi had intended to say. "She was a sprightly child all through, and this is the first time she has fallen ill like this. We never had an occasion to doubt that bad days were ahead of her. And according to the Raj Vaidya, she is not suffering from any illness as such. He was rather reluctant to give her any medicine and so had advised only

complete rest, though he did prescribe some medicines and now she can at least sit up in her bed."

At this stage, the queen took over. "But, Jyotishiji, today is her birthday, and you know we had never once failed to celebrate it. The people just wait for this day to shower their affection on her. That's how we thought of seeking your opinion. What exactly is wrong with her, Jyotishiji? Won't she get all right at all?" The queen sounded really worried.

The Jyotishi was all the while studying the horoscope carefully and making some calculations. After a while, he raised his face. "As far as I can see, it's just a passing phase. She had been under the influence of some planets that had turned malevolent, say for the past one year. It'll take them another eleven months and eleven days, to be exact, to change positions. Till then, she has to be very very careful. No, I don't think her health is affected. She needs a change—shall I say, a change of residence—before the planets themselves move from one 'house' to another?"

"But Jyotishiji," the queen

interjected, "how can she leave us? Besides, where will she go?"

There was silence for a while. The king then came out with an answer. "Our summer resort on that island... Jyotishiji, can she go and stay there? It's not far away and we can go and look her up every day."

"It's located south-east from here, isn't it?" the Jyotishi sought a clarification and waited for the nod from the king. "Yes, that'll be ideal. Let the princess stay there. As she will be alone, she won't need too many people on the spot. Let just one maid be with her there. Others can go from the palace every now and then taking her clothes or carrying her food. See to it that they don't stay there for long. And your majesties—I would advise you to see the princess only once a month, and I shall tell you on what days you can make the visit. The change I would like her to have should be as complete as possible. That's why I'm giving you all these instructions. It'll be only for a short period; you both may take it as a penance, but be assured, Princess Vidyavati will be all right by next year. In fact, I can even see prospects of a royal

wedding soon after the end of this bad period. When I left home, Acharya Jagatpati was with me. I shall consult him as well." The Jyotishi bade farewell to the king and queen.

Things moved fast after that. The king despatched some attendants to the summer resort to ensure that the place was kept ready to receive the princess and her maid. Queen Vajreswari decided that her own maid-in-waiting, old Kamala, who had been with her ever since she gave birth to Vidyavati, should go with her daughter. All male attendants at the summer resort were withdrawn and it was arranged that food for the princess and the maid would be carried from the palace by half-a-dozen maids by turns. And as soon as their duty ended, they would return to the palace. Only Kamala would stay with the princess all the time.

Just before midnight, as directed by the Raj Jyotishi, Princess Vidyavati was taken in a palanquin. The king and queen escorted her till the palace gates. Besides Kamala, two maids accompanied her till they got into a boat to take them across the



lake. The boat left its two passengers on the island at the steps leading to the little palace and, as instructed, came back to await instructions.

The boatman came and reported to the two maids who, in turn, went and told the king and queen that the princess and the maid had safely reached the island resort. The king and queen, who were unable to bear the absence of the princess from their midst, had closeted themselves to comfort each other and to wait for a word from the Raj Jyotishi about their own visit to the princess. They knew they had to spend some anxious days before they can see their beloved daughter. They also realised that they had to undertake this penance for the sake of the princess and her well-being. But how were they going to appease their subjects who had, year after

year, rejoiced on her birthday and revelled in the festivities throughout the kingdom?

These thoughts saddened them and when they came out of their chambers, they sent out messengers to different parts to tell the people of all that had happened and had been decided for the princess's welfare. The people were asked not to get agitated but to go about their normal work and were also assured that if the princess were to come out of her bad period before her next birthday, the celebrations would be held on a much grander scale. Such a reassurance from the king put them at ease, and everything appeared to be all right with the kingdom till it was rocked by the shocking news of Princess Vidyavati's mysterious disappearance from the summer resort.

— *To continue*



THE LIGHTER SIDE

LAL THE LAZY

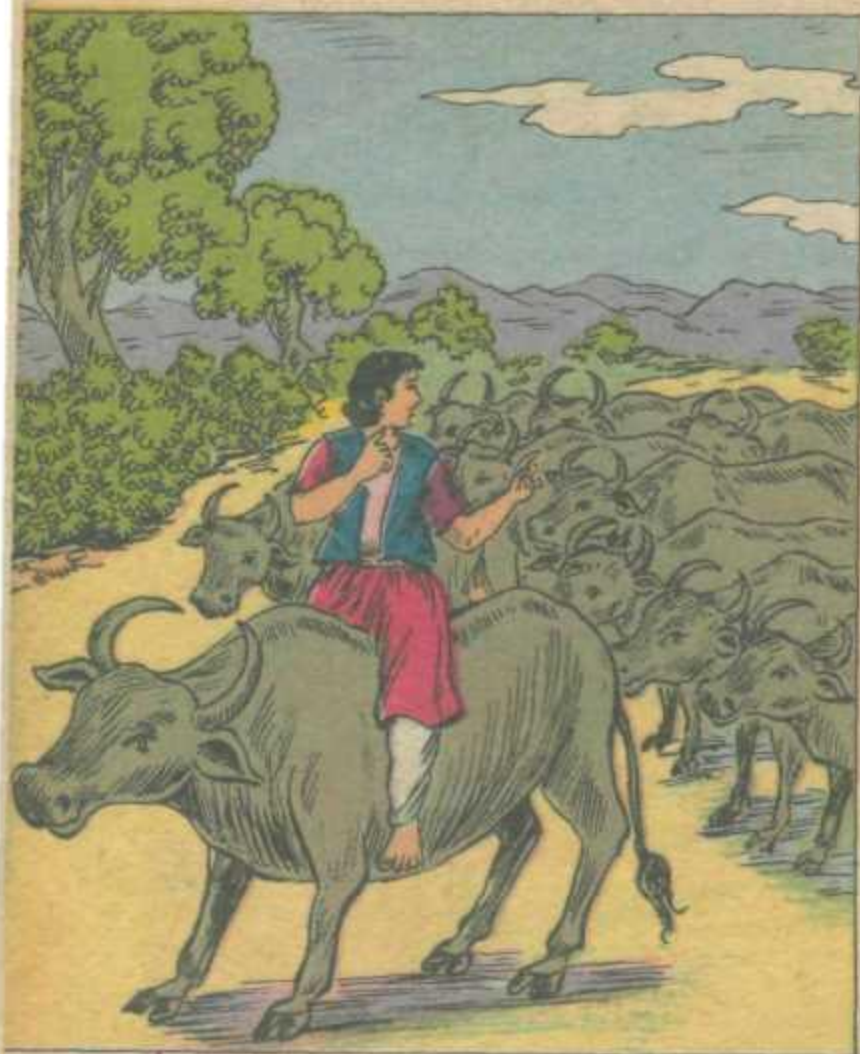


Lal grew up as a lazy fellow. He would avoid going in search of work if possible, and whenever someone gave him work and he earned some money, he would spend it miserly so that he could sit idle or just sleep away for several days together. The villagers of Badlapur found him a simpleton and had a soft corner for him, as he never gave them any trouble. They did not like to see him go hungry and would often ask him to share a meal with them, especially when they noticed that he had not gone for work for several days.

They thought he might change if

he were to get married, so they found him a bride. Lali was a charming girl and quite capable of managing a home. For the first few days, the villagers took turns in inviting them and feasting them, and Lal had no time to think of any work. Then, there were no more invitations, and the young couple was left to fend for themselves.

Contrary to what the villagers had expected, Lal was now more reluctant to go for work. He remained at home, watching every movement of his young wife. Then, one day, the village Pradhan called him and asked him whether he could take ten of his



buffaloes to his younger brother who stayed a few miles away. Lal readily agreed, as the job did not call for any physical exertion, except for a long walk.

Next morning, the buffaloes were ready, and Lal took leave of his wife, promising to return as early as possible before dusk. He set out enthusiastically, and walked for some distance with the buffaloes. He then remembered that he would have to be walking alone all the distance. Why should he tire himself when he could easily ride a buffalo? So, he jumped on to one of the animals. After a while, he found some of the

animals far behind. So, he stopped and waited for them to gather. Just to reassure himself, he counted them— one, two, three...nine. Only nine? Where was the tenth buffalo? Had one of them strayed away? He dismounted, walked back for some distance. No, there was no buffalo plodding its way. He hurried back to the herd and counted them once again: one, two, three... ten. "Thank god!" He heaved a sigh of relief; no animal was missing. He mounted an animal once again. After they had traversed some distance—the animals and their caretaker—Lal once again engaged himself in the counting exercise. One buffalo was missing! He got down and went in search of the animal. He could not find any that had left the herd, so went back to them and counted a second time. Eight, nine, ten! Lal was relieved, and he got on to a buffalo for the third time and led the herd. Just before he reached the other village, he wanted to make sure whether all the ten animals were with him. What? Only nine? If all the ten had walked all that distance, he felt, the missing tenth buffalo must be coming along.

He alighted in front of the house where the village Pradhan's brother stayed, and knocked at the door. The

old man came out. "So, you have brought the buffaloes this time?" he greeted Lal. "How many are there?"

"There are nine of them right here; one more is coming along and should be here any moment," said Lal, without even a word of apology.

"Let's wait for some time," said the Pradhan's brother. "I shall take them to the yard in one lot."

Both of them waited at the portico for some time, but no buffalo turned up. This time, the old man himself counted the animals and he found that all ten of them were there! "How did you say there were only nine?" he was rather harsh to Lal.

"I'm sure I counted only nine, and that was just before we left the road," said Lal defensively.

"And where were you?" asked the old man, quizzically. "Behind the herd?"

"No, I was in the front, riding one of them," replied Lal, rather hesitantly. "Why?"

"Ah! Now I know!" said the Pradhan's brother. "You must have counted all the buffaloes except the one you rode! And whenever you dismounted and counted them, you counted all ten of them! You're a *bewacooph*, I tell you!"

Though he called Lal an idiot or a



fool, the old man gave him food and sent him back with a letter to the village Pradhan, asking Lal to collect his remuneration from his brother. The village chief read the letter, gave out a hearty laugh and said, "A *bewacooph* must not be paid the full salary." But he was a kind-hearted gentleman and though he had echoed his brother's remark, he did not want Lal's wife to suffer because of his stupidity. So, he paid him the full salary for taking the buffaloes across to the other village, but did not refrain from describing Lal's counting exercise to the other villagers. Soon, they all started call-



ing him a *bewacooph*. Lali, too, came to know of this. Poor girl! What could she do, except to pity him?

That year, the monsoon was heavy and Lal and Lali found their house leaking at several places and the plaster on the walls peeling off. Lali waited till the rains subsided and began reminding her husband that the house needed urgent repairs.

"Yes, I too have noticed," Lal agreed readily, "but who will do the repairs?" he asked innocently.

"Why! You can attend to them," suggested his wife. "Get the material, like tiles for the roof and *chunam* for the walls. You can easily do the

repairs. You know well we can't afford to engage someone else to do the repairs," she quietly reminded him about the state of affairs.

"Me?" Lal seemed to be shocked at the suggestion. "Did you say me? I'm not feeling well."

Lali thought he was really unwell and so did not press him. After a couple of days, she broached the subject again. "I can't climb on to the roof, you know that!" he excused himself.

Lali kept silent. She kept silent for two more days, and then took courage in reminding him about the repairs. "This is our house, isn't it? Then we should repair it."

"Yes, yes, this is our house!" Lal caught hold of her hand, as he saw her eyes welling up with tears. "But, my dear, I don't know how to do it!"

Lali knew that her husband was just being lazy and she would have to think of some method by which he could be made to do the repairs himself.

That night she had an idea. The next morning, she began clearing the bushes and undergrowth around their house to make a winding path that led back to their own courtyard from another end. She kept quiet about the whole exercise and after a

few days, confronted him. "You haven't gone for work for some days now. If you go for work, we'll get some more money and then we can engage a labourer to do the repairs."

"All right, but who'll give me any work?" Lal queried.

"I heard that the owner of the house at the end of this path is looking for someone to work there. Why don't you try? You might be lucky," she prompted him.

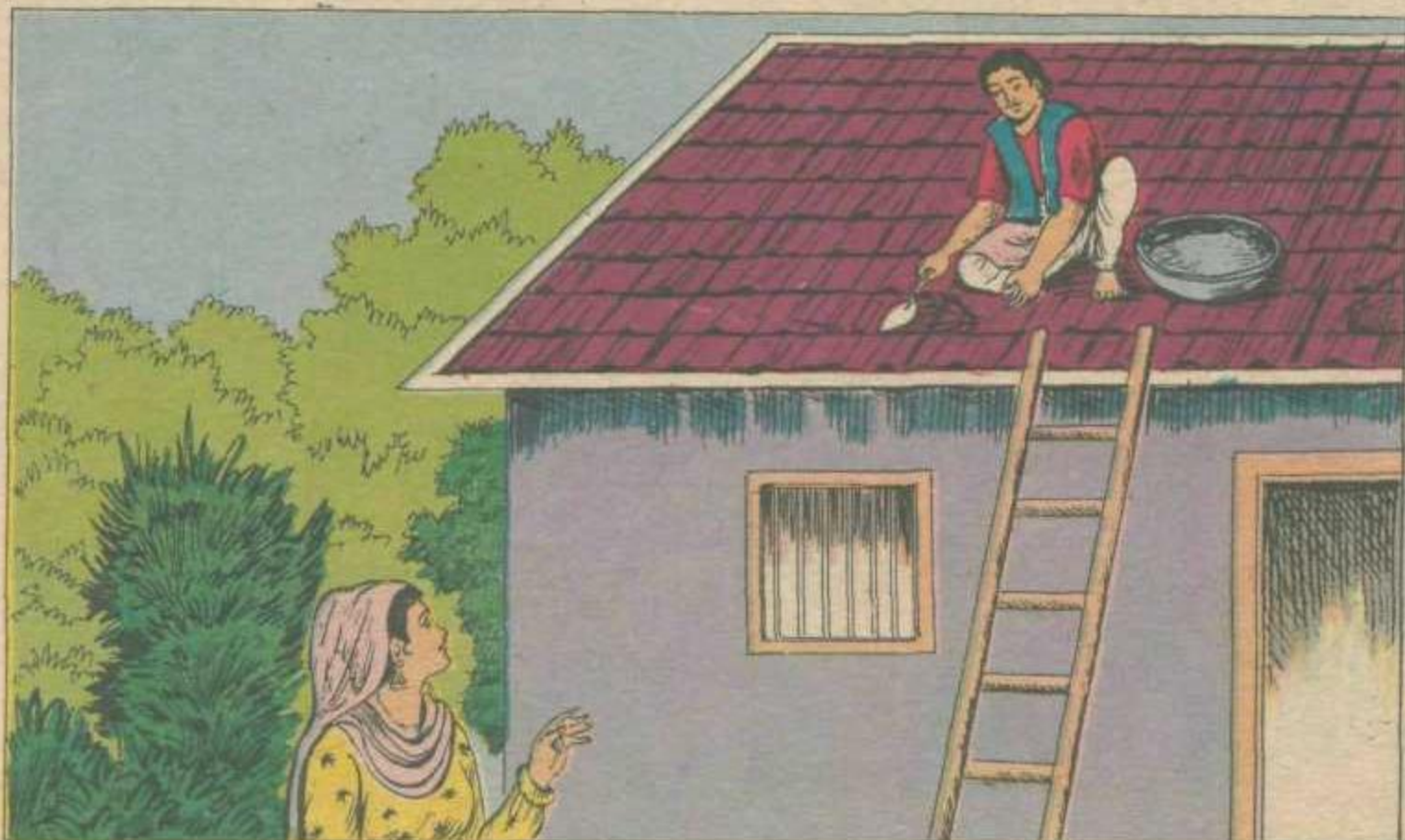
Lal was in a good mood that morning. So, he got ready and left along the winding path. By the time he knocked on the door and asked, "Is anyone here?" Lali had got into a new set of clothes, changed the

parting of her hair, and also re-arranged the cot and other things in the house.

She opened the door. "Yes, what do you want?" she asked.

Lal looked at her and wondered, 'Have I seen this woman before? The house also looks familiar. No, I must be mistaken'.

The woman repeated the question. Lal told her that someone had wanted a help and he himself was in search of work. To cut the story short, he was engaged straight away and the woman gave him directions to change the tiles on the roof and to replaster the walls. Lali had managed to borrow the material required



and at the end of the day, she paid him his wages! When Lal returned home in the evening, he kept quiet as he did not want to tell her of any woman looking almost like her. She, too, did not ask him anything about the work, lest she aroused any suspicion in him. She merely took the money that he gave her.

Lal completed the work at the 'other' house in four days. At the end of the fourth day, the 'woman' even gave him some extra money as she was quite pleased with him. After all, hadn't he done a quick job? He was singing softly as he neared his house. Unlike other days when he returned late in the evening, that day it was not yet dusk and he could not believe his eyes.

"Lali!" he called out to his wife.

"Our house had been repaired! How did you manage it?"

"Oh! That's a secret, my dear husband," she replied, trying to control her laughter. "But aren't you happy?"

"Of course, I am," responded Lal, "but do tell me, whom did you engage?"

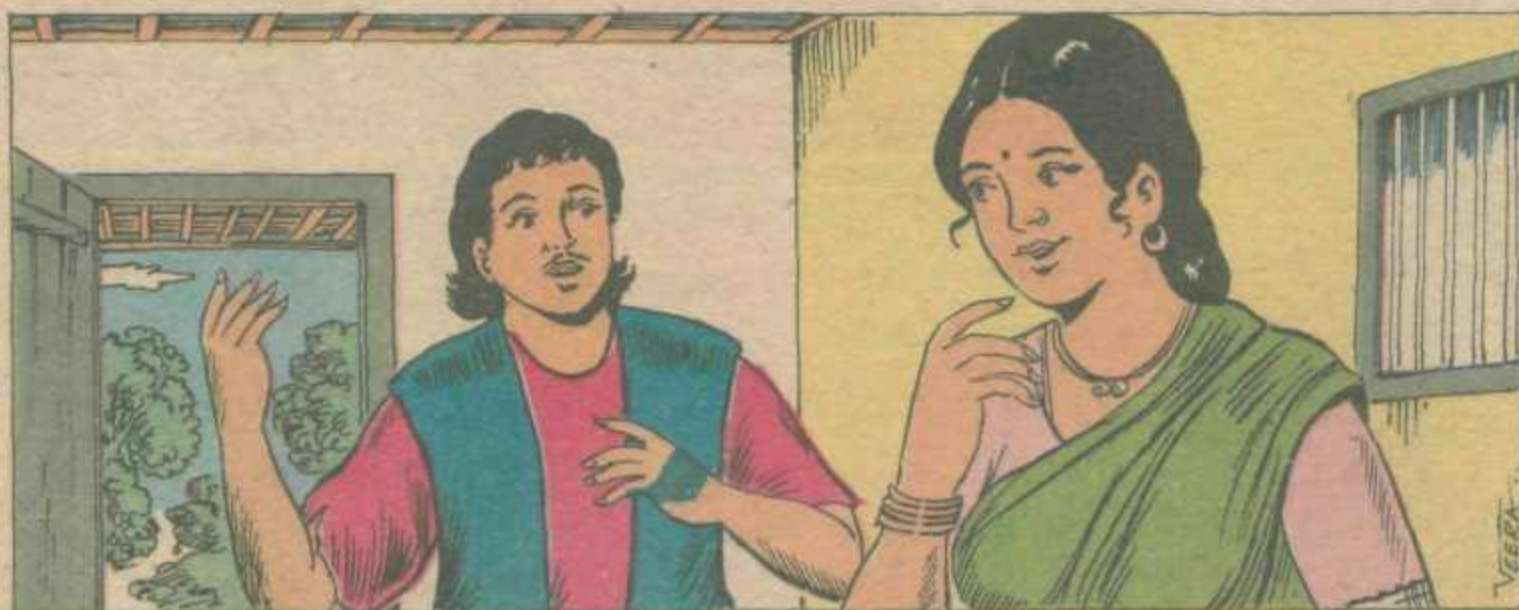
"If you won't get angry with me, I shall tell you," said Lali in a measured breath.

"No. Why should I get angry with you?" protested Lal. "After all, the work has been done, nay, completed. Who did it?" Lal could not hide his curiosity.

"None else than a *bewacooph!*" said Lali with a smile.

"You mean to say that I was repairing my own house?" remarked Lal, scratching his head.

Lali simply nodded.



CHANDAMAMA

SUPPLEMENT-42



BIRDS AND ANIMALS OF INDIA

LION

Undisputedly, the lion is the 'King of the jungle'. Whether it is *Panchatantra* or *Aesop's Fables*, all those stories in which the lion is a character describe him as such, and nobody has been able to deprive him of that title, though in India, he also had the status of National animal, till the tiger usurped that position in the '70s. A national newspaper had then carried a cartoon showing the lion ringing up one of the leading lawyers in the country, asking him to file a petition in the Supreme Court!

That apart, the lion (*panthera leo*) is majestic to look at, because of its bushy mane which is peculiar to the male lion. This animal, like the tiger, belongs to the cat family, yet it does not look like a cat, mainly because of the mane. A full-grown lion is about 275 cm from the nose to the tip of its tail and 90 cm high. It is greyish yellow in colour, with the mane acquiring a slightly darker shade. The lions live in groups, called "prides". A pride may have from four or five to twenty lions, of all ages.

Once upon a time, the lions roamed the entire country but were pushed south from the northern parts by the more ferocious tigers which are believed to have come from the Siberian region. The Gir National Park in Gujarat has been their last refuge. The sanctuary has some 230 animals now.

A CUB REPORTER FROM FINLAND

The International Children's Film Festival was on in Trivandrum, capital of Kerala, last November. Sitting in the Press enclosure was a little girl, about 10 years old. People took her to be the daughter of some invitee from abroad. But they were in for a surprise when they saw her wearing an official identity card which stated that her name was Ino Hikkinen, and that she was representing the Finnish TV! She was attending the Film Festival in her official capacity, to view the entries, write about them for her home viewers, and to interview the stars and starlets of the Indian movies. She was part of a six-member TV crew from Finland.

On her arrival, she was straight away taken to the venue of the Festival—the Kanakakunnu Palace, on a hillock right in the heart of the city. She just fell in love with the place—a love at first sight, so to say. And by the time she was through with the Festival in the next fortnight, she had fallen in love with many Indian films and the actors in them, not to speak of the Indian food she tasted at the Festival canteen. But she confided that what she liked most were some of

the typical Kerala dishes. When she packed her baggage, she did not forget to tuck in some packets of the golden banana chips for her people back home.

This fourth standard student utilised most of her free time to mingle with the children among the viewers and those who spent their time in the improvised playground outside the Palace and to roam on the sprawling lawns.

It was not a mere Festival, she commented: it was a real feast to the eyes, especially because Finland does not produce many children's films. In Trivandrum, she saw double the number of movies she had seen in her life in theatres and on the TV combined. She found it difficult to single out any one movie that had captivated her; there were so many of them. But the Malayalam entry "Abhayam", woven round the story of a 10-year-old boy who

is compelled to study all the time by his mother and who seeks refuge (abhayam) in the bosom of his affectionate grandfather, earned a place in her heart.

By the way, Ino is an expert on the piano, and loves to paint and play tennis. Her favourite is Steffi Graf.



DO YOU KNOW?

1. What is the pig's largest relative?
2. What language do the Gypsies speak?
3. A country is surrounded by a city! Name both of them.
4. Who invented the fountain pen?
5. Which woman pilot first flew solo across the Atlantic?
6. Every numeral can be written in the Roman way, except one. Which one?
7. Which is the Red Planet?
8. Before universally adopting red colour for post-boxes, what colour was given to them?
9. Where did puppets originate?
10. In which country did the Batik style of painting originate?
11. How does a crab move?
12. What is Sir Roger Bannister famous for?
13. Can you identify the Land of the White Elephant?
14. Dr. Christian Barnard pioneered a kind of operation in 1967. What was it?
15. He was the first journalist to go into space, in 1990. Here's a clue; he was a Japanese. Name him.

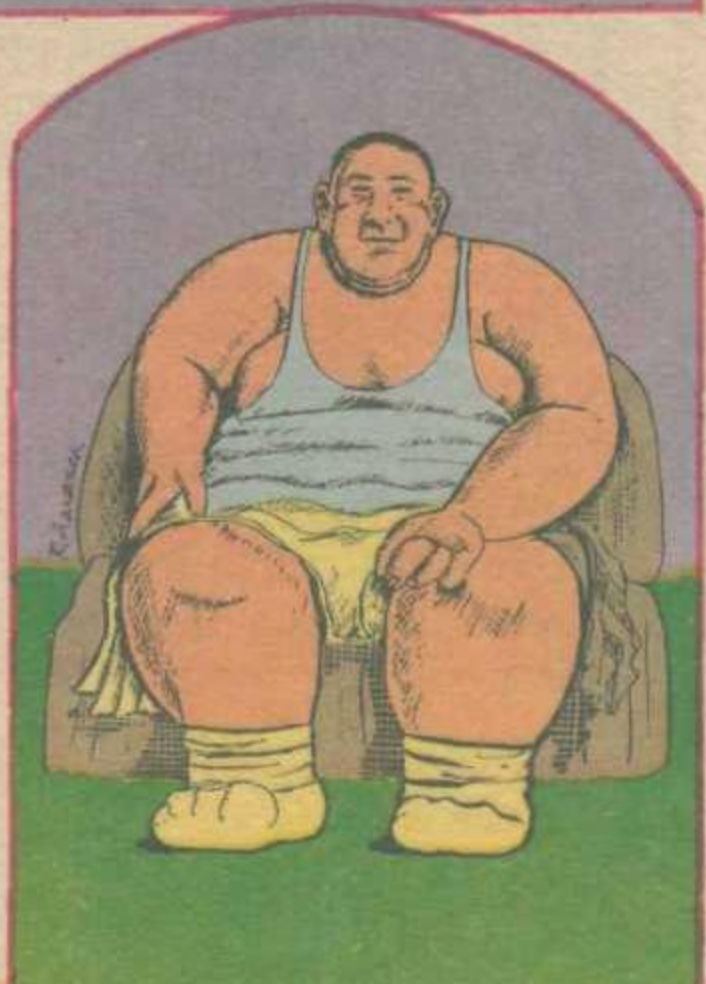
ANSWERS

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| 1. The hippopotamus | 15. Toyohiro Akiyama |
| 2. Romany | 14. Heart transplant |
| 3. The Vatican — Rome | 13. Siam—now known as Thailand |
| 4. Lewis Waterman | 12. It was he who first ran the mile in less than 4 minutes. |
| 5. Amelia Erhart, in 1928. | 11. Sideways |
| 6. Zero | 10. Indonesia |
| 7. Mars | 9. In India and Egypt |
| 8. Green | |

NEWS FLASH

Monkey 'star' for U.S.A.

For the Japanese, 1992 is the Year of the Monkey. The importance given to this animal is reflected in the fact, among other things, that monkey performances (so popular in Indian streets) have moved from streets to the stage; they are known as "sarumawashi". Historically, Japan saw monkeys performing when they came from China a thousand years ago. Soon, it was developed into an art in Japan. It suffered a setback after the advent of Westernisation during the 1860s. At the end of a 100-year ban, it was revived, and the Japanese have perfected it to such a high standard that the popular TV star 'Jiro' and his master, Taro Murasaki, are currently rehearsing "Hamlet" for shows in the U.S.A.



Heaviest

Walter Hudson did not move out of his house in Nassau, New York, for 18 long years. The reason: he was fat and heavy. He once weighed 544 kg, and with great difficulty, he slimmed to 236 kg; it was then that he could go on that rare outing. He was only 46 at the time of his death a couple of months ago. He weighed 272 kg at that time. The burial had to wait till the body shrunk a little and could be taken out through the door.

The Czar and the Braggart



There was once a Czar who liked to spend his time listening to braggarts. But he would stipulate a condition: the boast had to be so effective that the Czar should be prompted to call his bluff, in which case the narrator could claim the gold coins kept in a tray. And if he failed to convince the Czar, that would mean the end of the narrator. And for that, the Czar kept a sword in another tray, and many a braggart had met their end at the hands of the cruel Czar.

One day, an old farmer decided to

try his luck. When he arrived at the palace, he was quite drunk and he announced in the court that he would be truthful and narrate only whatever had really happened. He was determined to claim the 'golden' reward. By the time he took his seat, the two trays were placed before the Czar—one containing the coins and the other the shining sword. The Czar and the courtiers eagerly waited for the old man to start his narration.

"Yesterday, I was ploughing the field," he began slowly. "After some time, I found my horse dead tired.

So, I let him free. Very strangely, he would jump forward and the next moment he would jump backward. This went on for a long time,



and do you know what happened?" the farmer paused for a while, as he looked at the alert faces of the Czar and his courtiers. "The horse was split into two parts, with the front half running back home, and the rear portion falling down in the field".

"You're just bluffing!" shouted the courtiers.

The Czar was not ready to agree with them. "The farmer is clever. He seems to be capable of many things," he said. Turning to the farmer, he asked, "Then, what did you do?"

"Oh! I patted the back of the horse and made him run with me, and we caught up with the front half. I stuck the two halves with gum from the gum-tree, tied the horse to the tree, and lay down and slept. When I woke up, I found the tree had grown so tall that it was touching the sky."

The courtiers shouted, "It's all a lie! A tree so tall as to touch the sky? Impossible!"

The Czar was, however, enjoying the story. He cautioned his courtiers, "The farmer seems to be very clever. Let's not underestimate him."

"You want to know what I did, then?" the farmer asked the Czar, ignoring the courtiers. "I climbed the tree and went up, up, up, till I reached heaven."

The courtiers thought of cornering him." Heaven, did you say? You must have then seen god. What was he doing there?"

"God was playing cards with his disciples," said the farmer, casually.

"Just as I play cards with you sometimes," added the Czar, trying to put his courtiers at ease.

"Does god play cards? We don't believe him, sire!" said the courtiers, apologetically.

"The farmer appears to be clever," interjected the Czar. "He's capable of many things. Let's listen to him."

"I wandered in heaven for some time," the farmer continued his narration. "Then I remembered, I had not completed ploughing the field. So I had to come down to the earth. I couldn't find the gum-tree that had grown up to heaven. Luckily, I found someone busy spinning. He spared for me a very long thread. I tied it to the sky and climbed down. Unfortunately, it was not long enough to get me to the earth. You know what I did? I cut a portion of the thread from the top and tied that bit at the end below."

The courtiers could not accept any more of his story. "He's telling a lie!" they shouted. "Sire, when he cut the thread from the top, it would

not have remained tied to the sky and he would have fallen down!"

The Czar was not taken by their argument. "I'm sure the farmer is



capable of all that. He's clever," the Czar supported the farmer.

"Just before I reached the earth I found that the thread was not touching the ground," the farmer carried on with his story. "I wanted to climb again and cut another piece from the top. But I was too lazy and decided to jump down. You know where I landed? No, not in my field. As luck would have it, it was a desert and I was caught in the shifting sand and I went down up to my neck. I stretched my hand. I got hold of a spade lying some yards away, cleared the sand, and came out."

The courtiers found his bluff too much. "If you were neck deep in shifting sand, how could you pull out your hand? And how could you stretch it for yards? Impossible! You're just bluffing."

"The farmer is clever," maintained

the Czar. It was clear that he was not yet willing to call the farmer's bluff. "You've no idea of his ability."

The old farmer was now prompted to end his story, as he began eyeing the tray full of gold coins. "I walked up to a meadow where I found an old goatherd grazing his goats. I greeted him. 'Your goats?' I asked, and complimented him, 'Healthy animals!' He stared at me and said, 'I'm not a goatherd. I'm the Czar's father.'"

"Did he say he was *my* father? Impossible!" shouted the Czar. "My father was a Czar himself and he never went to graze goats. You're bluffing!"

"In which case, sire," said the cunning farmer, "all these gold coins are mine!" He pulled out his handkerchief, tied the coins in it, and walked out triumphantly.





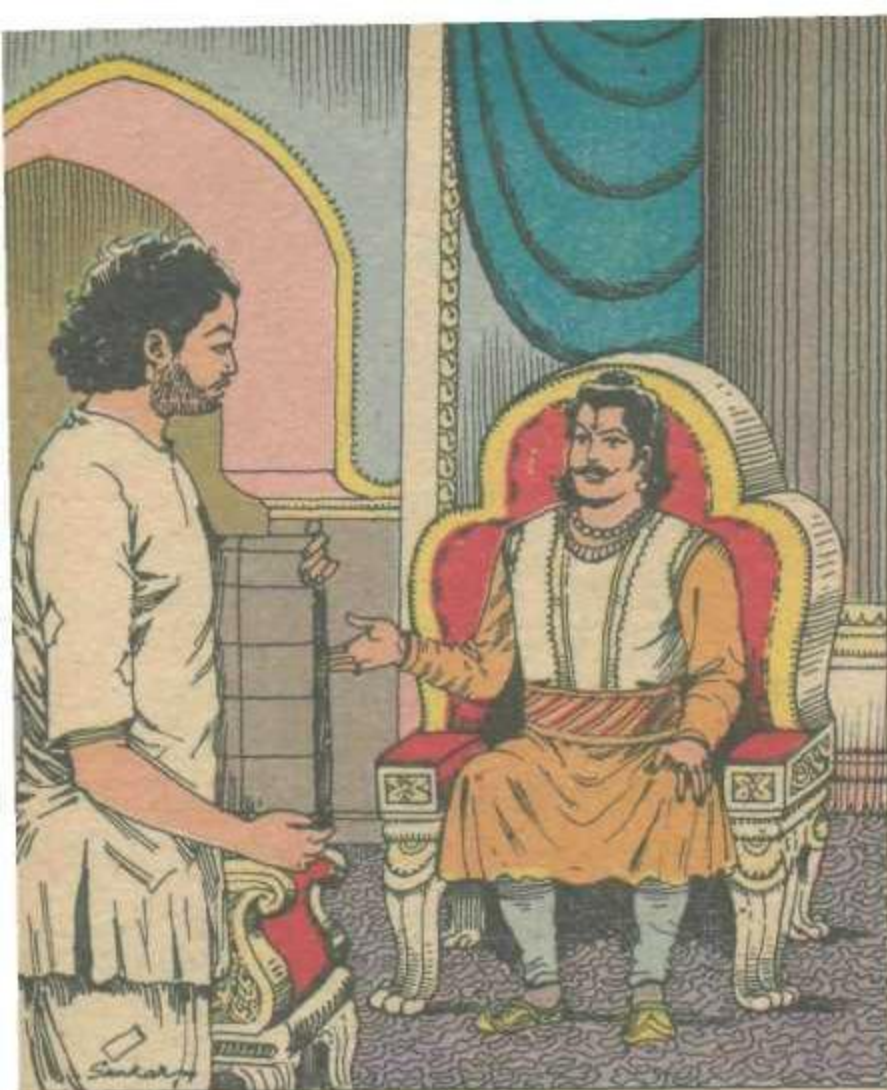
New Tales of King Vikram and the Vampire

A Change of Heart

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time; gusts of wind shook the trees. Between thunderclaps and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning revealed fearsome faces.

But King Vikramaditya did not swerve a bit. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought down the corpse. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground, with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse spoke: "O king you seem to be making untiring efforts and without respite so as to achieve something. I don't understand why you should suffer for the sake of others. There must be some limit to your efforts. I am reminded of the story of the wealthy Dhanapal and his friend. Listen to me." The vampire then narrated the story.

Dhanapal owned a lot of properties in Swarnagiri. He was a kind-hearted soul. The king, Parakramasen, was his intimate friend. Whenever the treasury was depleted with money and the king needed



help, Dhanapal would help him with a loan, and when the king returned the money with interest, Dhanapal would give away the extra money to the poor. He was a benefactor of the people, who worshipped him.

Dhanapal was an expert in painting. His paintings looked very realistic. He had an interest in sculpture and all kinds of handcraft. Whenever he came across an artefact, he would buy it whatever be the price, and enjoy it at home. He never parted with any one of them, even if his friend Parakramasen were to ask for it. The king used to feel about this peculiar attitude of Dhanapal.

One day, he had a visitor, Kailasanath, a youth dressed in tattered clothes but with the look of great respectability. He received the young man with courtesy and asked him to sit down even before he disclosed his mission. "I had been to many people who were all taken aback by my dress and appearance. This is the first time someone has even offered me a chair. I am indeed grateful to you. I'm told you're collecting artefacts. My ancestors were wealthy zamindars; unfortunately, we had to give up all our wealth and sell everything, except a rare painting. I came here to find out whether you'll be interested in acquiring it." The young man then opened a packet that he had brought in and revealed the painting.

Dhanapal was wonderstruck by the beauty of the picture. He felt he had not seen such a work before. It was so realistic and showed a mother fondling her child. The smile on the face of the little one and the affectionate look of the mother were so captivating. Dhanapal was, in fact, eagerly looking for a painting like this.

"I don't think this picture has been drawn from imagination," remarked Dhanapal. "It must have been mod-



elled on somebody living."

"Your assumption is correct," said Kailasanath. "The woman in the picture is my mother. The child is none else than me. My father rewarded the artist who drew this painting with a hundred acres of land. However, my present position is such that I've to sell this picture to eke out a livelihood."

"What a lovely picture! Tell me, how much will you take for it?" asked Dhanapal of Kailasanath.

"I shall be satisfied if you'll give me a hundred silver coins," said the youth. "With that money I shall be able to do some business."

"You've asked too little for such a priceless painting," remarked Dhanapal.

"Right now I need only that much, and I shall be satisfied with that," said Kailasanath. "I've no other go except to sell this."

Dhanapal paid him a hundred silver coins and sent him away. That evening, he took the painting to King Parakramasen. "How beautiful! Would you mind giving it to me?" asked the king.

"You know me so well, my friend," replied Dhanapal. "Still, why should you put that question to me? No, I'm sorry I can't part with it."



The king fell silent and did not broach the subject again. Years went by. One day, the king had called on Dhanapal, and as they were conversing, Kailasanath came there. Dhanapal affectionately received him and introduced him to the king. "How have you been keeping?" Dhanapal queried.

"With the hundred coins you gave me, I started a business," said Kailasanath. "It gave me good returns, and I'm earning well. I shall never forget the help you rendered. I've come today to seek another favour."

"Tell me, what kind of help do you need now?" asked Dhanapal





with great concern. "Whatever be it, don't hesitate to tell me."

"From the day I sold that painting to you, I've been spending sleepless nights," explained Kailasanath. "Could I take it back from you? I'm ready to pay the price you ask for it."

Dhanapal could understand the youth's agony. After all, he was forced to sell a painting of his mother. King Parakramasen, who was listening to their conversation, was thinking on different lines. When he had asked for the painting, Dhanapal had shown reluctance to part with it. He wondered, what would be his attitude now?

"Once I buy something, I never part with it," Dhanapal excused himself. "That's my habit. I'm afraid I can't change it for your sake."

"It's only because of my love and affection for my mother that I'm pleading with you to make an exception," said Kailasanath in all humility. "I sold it because I had no alternative. I now feel I should never have sold it. Would you please reconsider your stand?"

Dhanapal thought for a while; he really wanted to oblige the young man, realising his predicament. "I can very well understand your regard for your mother," said Dhanapal. "I would like to give you an offer. Everybody knows that I'm a good artist. I shall make a copy of that painting, in about a week. If you can come by then and identify the original, I shall return it to you and you don't have to pay me anything. And the judge will be our king here. Do you agree?"

Kailasanath agreed to the proposition and went away promising to come back after a week. Dhanapal made a true copy of the painting by that time. He took the two paintings to the palace and left them with the king, awaiting the arrival of Kailasanath.

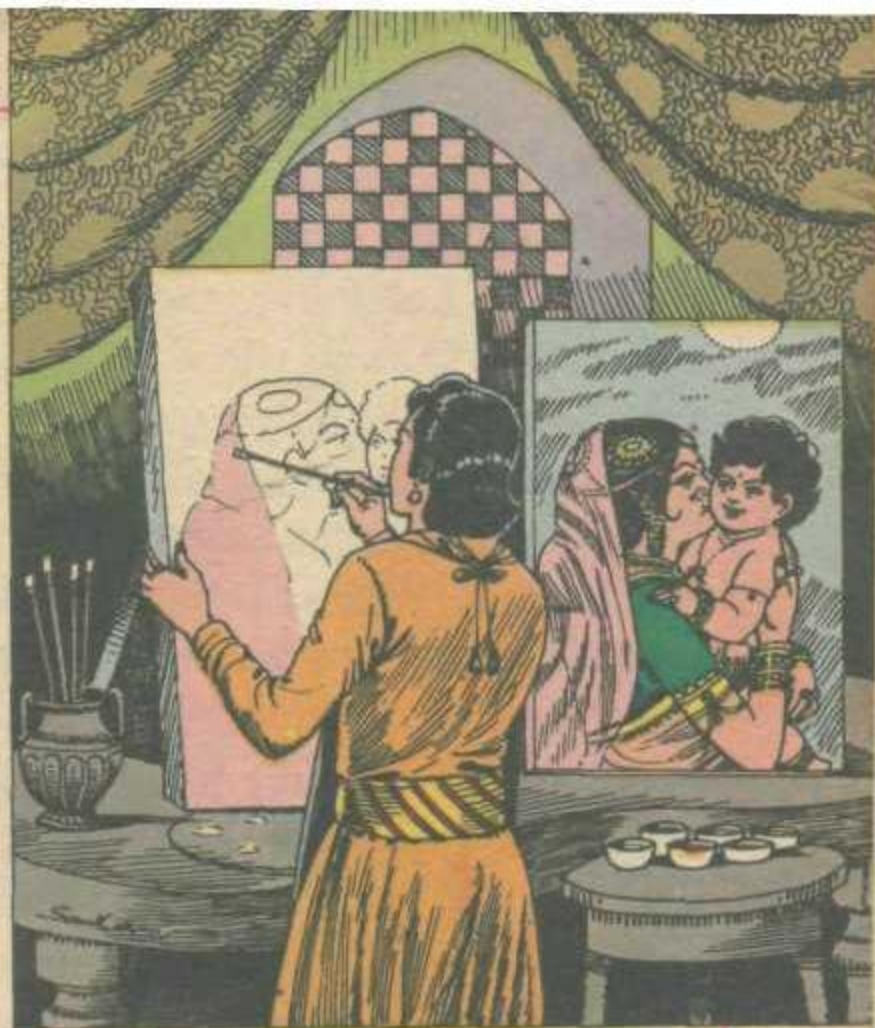


When he arrived, the young man looked at the pictures very carefully and recognised the original painting. Dhanapal was happy. "Kailasanath! You've won! Yes, that's the painting you sold to me. You may take it back. I hope you'll have some peace of mind."

King Parakramasen was surprised. "The two portraits look very much alike. Still you found out the original. How did you manage it?" he asked of the young man.

"Your majesty! There's no doubt, Dhanapal is a great artist," explained Kailasanath. "He has taken pains in preparing the copy. The nosescREW that my mother wears in the original picture has a blue stone. Whereas he has drawn a red stone! This is a very minor detail, not easily recognisable. But I could notice the error. In fact, I'm wondering how such a capable artist as Dhanapal could make that mistake!"

The king turned to Dhanapal. "My friend, Kailasanath may not know how you happened to commit that error. But I could guess. Somehow I had a feeling that you're devoid of a soft heart, though you've a good character. I was under the wrong impression that you would never part with something that you have



bought; I now know that you're always willing to make a sacrifice." He then took off his diamond necklace and put it around Dhanapal's neck.

The vampire concluded his narration there and asked King Vikramaditya: "It was Dhanapal's nature not to part with anything that he had bought. He posed as if he was willing to show an exception in the case of Kailasanath, but imposed a test for him. Normally, he would have expected to win. Kailasanath recognised the original painting from the colour of the stone on the nosescREW. Under these circumstances, why did

the king say he had guessed how Dhanapal had committed the error? Also what made him praise Dhanapal? If you know the answers and still decide to keep silent, beware, your head will be blown to pieces!"

Vikramaditya, as usual, did not have to think for the answers. "Before I decide whether Dhanapal had made a mistake or not, let me remind you of the relationship between Dhanapal and King Parakramasen. They were good friends, yet Dhanapal refused to change his nature and gift the painting to the king despite his earnest request to his friend, Dhanapal. But when Kailasanath asked for the picture in the presence of the king, he knew that the king would get angry with him if he gave away the painting then and there. At the same time as Kailasanath had asked for the painting because of his regard for his

mother, he could not reject the request straightway. Dhanapal wanted to oblige him, and wondered how he would meet the delicate situation. That's why he insisted on a test and decided to make a copy of the painting and to change the colour of the nosescREW deliberately. He was confident that the young man was capable of identifying the painting that he had sold. In fact, Dhanapal had taken great care to capture every minute detail. So, when the king realised that Dhanapal had gone to all that extent because of his kindness, he had no hesitation in complimenting him."

The vampire realised that the king had outwitted him once again. He gave the slip to Vikramaditya and flew back to the ancient tree, taking the corpse along with him. The king drew his sword and went after the vampire.



LEAVES FROM THE LIVES OF THE GREAT

EARNINGS FROM AN EPITAPH

Alfred Tennyson is a name familiar with most children. During their high school days, they would have learnt at least half-a-dozen of his poems. Even when he was a young boy, it appears, he used to dabble in writing poems. However, his people did not take his hobby either seriously or sympathetically.

When his grandmother died, there was the usual talk of erecting a tomb over her grave and placing a tombstone on it. Young Alfred was fond of his grandmother, and he composed a few lines about her. He was hesitant at first, but later took courage in showing what he wrote to his grandfather. Wonder of wonders, the old man liked the poem and decided to have it inscribed on the tombstone.

At the cemetery, the grandfather read the poem once again, then took out ten shillings from his pocket and gave them to Alfred, saying, "This is your first income from poetry, and possibly the last."

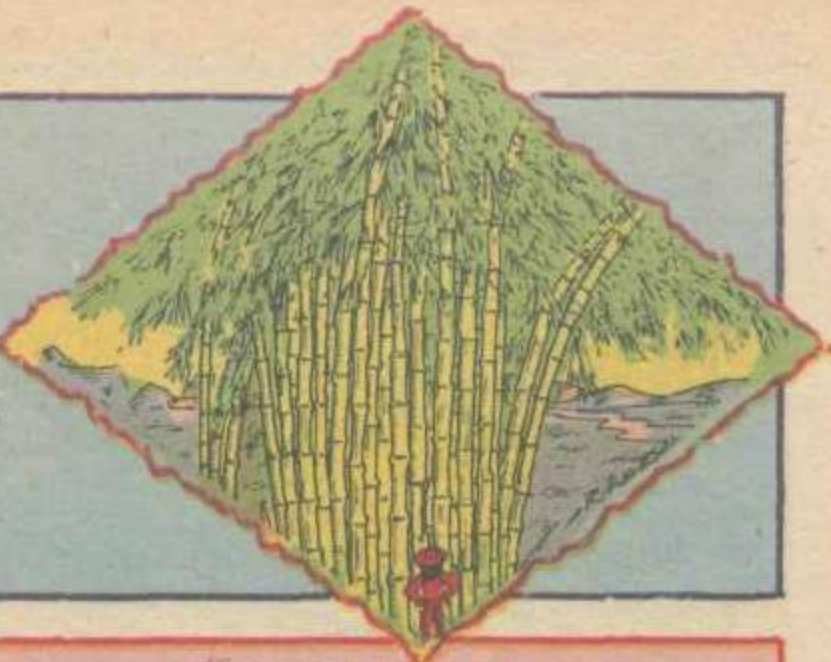
The grandfather was proved wrong, because Tennyson became one of the most famous poets of his times, and was duly made a peer—Lord Tennyson (1809-1892).



WORLD OF NATURE

TALLER IN A JIFFY

The giant-sized bamboos of south-east Asian countries, like Thailand Malaysia, and Indonesia, grow at a terrific speed—like 1 metre in 24 hours! The bamboos in north-east India acquires a new "ring" (the distance between two rings is less than a metre) in about 6 to 8 weeks.



FOREWARNED

Animals are generally believed to have the capacity to receive indications of natural calamities much in advance. For example, fishes come to know of earthquakes, storms, and volcanic eruptions well ahead of them. The Jelly-fish is able to sense a storm some 15 hours in advance and leaves the shore and goes into the deep sea. Strangely, all deep-sea fish come up to the surface on receiving hints of an approaching calamity. In Japan, which is prone to frequent earth tremors, the fish kept in aquariums dash about hours before the quake.



TERMITE EVERESTS

The nests which termites build appear like mounds above the ground. Some termite mounds are reported to have attained a height of more than 7m (21 ft.)—a veritable Everest for the tiny termite!





VEER HANUMAN

19

(Lanka gets ready to face an impending attack by Rama and the Vanara army. Ravana's brother, Vibhishana, advises him to return Sita to Rama and seek his pardon. Ravana is furious. Vibhishana leaves Lanka and seeks Rama's protection.)

It was now certain that Rama and Lakshmana, helped by an army of monkeys, were poised to attack Lanka. Their impending attack was the subject of discussion in Ravana's court. Many in the court were of the view that they should get ready to resist the invasion. They were confident that no army was a match to the demon soldiers of Lanka. So, why

should they be afraid of meeting the enemy face to face? Everybody argued, except one person. He was Vibhishana, younger brother of Ravana.

He got up from his seat, bowed to his brother, and addressed the court. "There are various methods to solve any problem. We can have a give-and-take policy; we can think of fa-

VIBHISHANA'S PREDICAMENT



vours and bribes, and if these fail, we can try threats, and only if all these have no effect need we contemplate a fight or an invasion. We should not under-estimate Rama's strength and might. If just one monkey could come over and create havoc in Lanka, what might not happen if an army of monkeys were to invade our city? It looks as though god is on their side. As far as I know, Rama does only good deeds. It's true he killed the two demons, Kara and Bhushana, but you should not have retaliated by kidnapping his wife, Sita. He had to kill the demons in self-defence. By kidnapping Sita,

we have only earned his enmity and invited trouble from him. It's not too late even now. Let's send back Sita to Rama. That's the only way we can save Lanka. Otherwise, all of us will perish with Lanka. Sree Rama is a mighty warrior and he is god's incarnation. It would be better if we keep all this in mind and not contemplate a war but think of peace. I'm sure Rama will forgive us if we seek his pardon."

Ravana did not at all like his brother's attitude and advice. He said angrily, "I care a hoot for anybody, the least for Rama. I'm not even afraid of god. And *you* have the audacity to suggest that I go and seek his forgiveness! Your Ravana would never ask for anybody's pardon. I've supremacy over all living beings on earth. Rama won't be able to rescue Sita from Lanka!" Ravana dismissed the *darbar* for the day.

The next day Ravana, attired in armour, inspected his army and its preparedness for war. By the time he went back and sat on his throne, his commanders had followed him and taken their appointed seats. He looked around. Everybody was silent, and anxious to listen to Ravana. He addressed the chief of the army. "Brahastha, you may take



steps to protect the city!" This command from Ravana was sufficient to alert everybody that their leader had at last decided to fight the invaders.

Brahastha assured him that he had already initiated action to safeguard the city, and asked Ravana whether he had anything more on his mind. "If ever our country were to be invaded, you're competent to organise its defence. My own decision is known to everybody, except one person. My brother, Kumbhakarna, was asleep for the last six months and was unaware of all that had happened. He has just woken up and is very much here. I'm not going to send back Sita, that's certain. Are you confident of successfully resisting an attack by Rama? Are you sure whether Rama will lead an army across the sea to invade us?"

Kumbhakarna was listening to all the conversation between Ravana and his commanders. He felt angry and disgusted with his brother. "Did you consult anyone before you kidnapped Sita?" he asked Ravana bluntly. "What's the fun of seeking our advice now? You seem to have become wise at the last moment! This is like performing *Suryanamaskar* blindfold! Your never anticipated these repercussions when you



kidnapped Sita, did you? Don't think you can conquer Rama that easily. Anyway, don't worry, I'm always on your side and shall help you as much as I can. After all, you are my sibling."

Kumbhakarna's harsh words made Ravana's face turn red with anger. This was noticed by Mahaparsva. "You needn't feel worried that all this has happened merely because you kidnapped Sita. Whatever has happened has happened. We shall courageously face the situation. Just give us the orders, we are all ready to fight the enemy. We're not afraid of losing our lives. Why



should we fear at all when you've Kumbhakarna and Indrajit on your side? Even the Lord of all gods, Devendra, won't be able to touch you. Then why speak of Rama? Or his monkey army? The first day's fight itself will end in their vanquish."

This assurance by Mahaparsva put Ravana at ease. "What you said is true, my commander!" responded Ravana. "However, my mind is restless. I've a premonition of impending disaster for all of us. Once I tried to touch an Apsara maiden against her wish, and she went and complained to Brahma, who cursed me

that my head would be blown to pieces if ever I tried to touch a woman against her wish. That's why I've avoided touching Sita till now. However, I'm even now trying to get her agree to my wish to make her my wife. Rama is now challenging me without assessing my strength. I'll surely give him a chance!"

Vibhishana was not happy the way their conversation and thoughts were progressing. He pleaded with Ravana once again: "Your majesty, why should you covet Sita? Don't you know she is the wife of someone else? Besides she is a chaste woman. By kidnapping her, you've brought nemesis to yourself. It's better for you to return her to Rama and seek his pardon. Neither Kumbhakarna nor Indrajit will be able to save you from Rama."

While Ravana pondered over Vibhishana's words, others were quick in their response. Brahashta asserted that nobody would be able to conquer Ravana. Indrajit ridiculed Vibhishana's talk as senseless. He claimed that any one of the demons in Lanka was capable of killing Rama in combat. He himself had once subdued Lord Indra and he was there to defend his father, Ravana.

Vibhishana once again suggested peaceful negotiations with Rama. "Son, your attitude will only bring disaster to the dynasty of Ravana. Remember the consequences of fighting Rama. Nobody will be able to face Rama's arrows. He is mighty with his bow and arrows. It will, therefore, be advisable to return Sita to Rama."

Ravana could no longer tolerate Vibhishana and his advice. He rebuked him and said angrily, "You happen to be my younger brother, so I'm letting you free; if it had been anyone else, he would have lost his head by now!"

Vibhishana, too, lost his temper. "You're my elder brother, and an

elder brother is like one's father. It's only for your good that I spoke like that. There are several people here who only sing in praise of you. They do so to cull favours from you. I'm not like them. If my brother gets into trouble, that'll also affect me equally. Whatever I had in mind, I've given expression to it. I didn't expect it to cause any worry to you. Please bear with me for that. Wish you well! I'm leaving Lanka!" Vibhishana then walked out of the palace.

Accompanied by four of his demon bodyguards, Vibhishana travelled along the sky to where Rama and others were camping. The Vanara soldiers took them to be Ravana's spies when they found them





roaming in the camp. After passing word to Sugriva and Hanuman, they went about collecting trees and branches to resist a possible attack by Ravana and his demons. Hanuman asked the soldiers to be on the alert.

Vibhishana soon found where Rama was resting. He was surrounded by Sugriva and other Vanara leaders. To their hearing, he declared: "I'm Ravana's brother Vibhishana. I was critical of his actions and he did not like my attitude. I've now come away from Lanka, and I'm sure Rama won't send away anyone who goes to him

for protection."

Sugriva then explained to Rama thus: "He's Vibhishana, younger brother of Ravana. He has come here seeking your shelter and protection. However, how can we be sure whether all that he says is true? He is accompanied by four demons. Demons are clever tricksters and we can't be sure of them. Maybe they've been sent here by Ravana to assess our strength and plans. They may even try to bring about dissension among our men. I suggest that we put them to death."

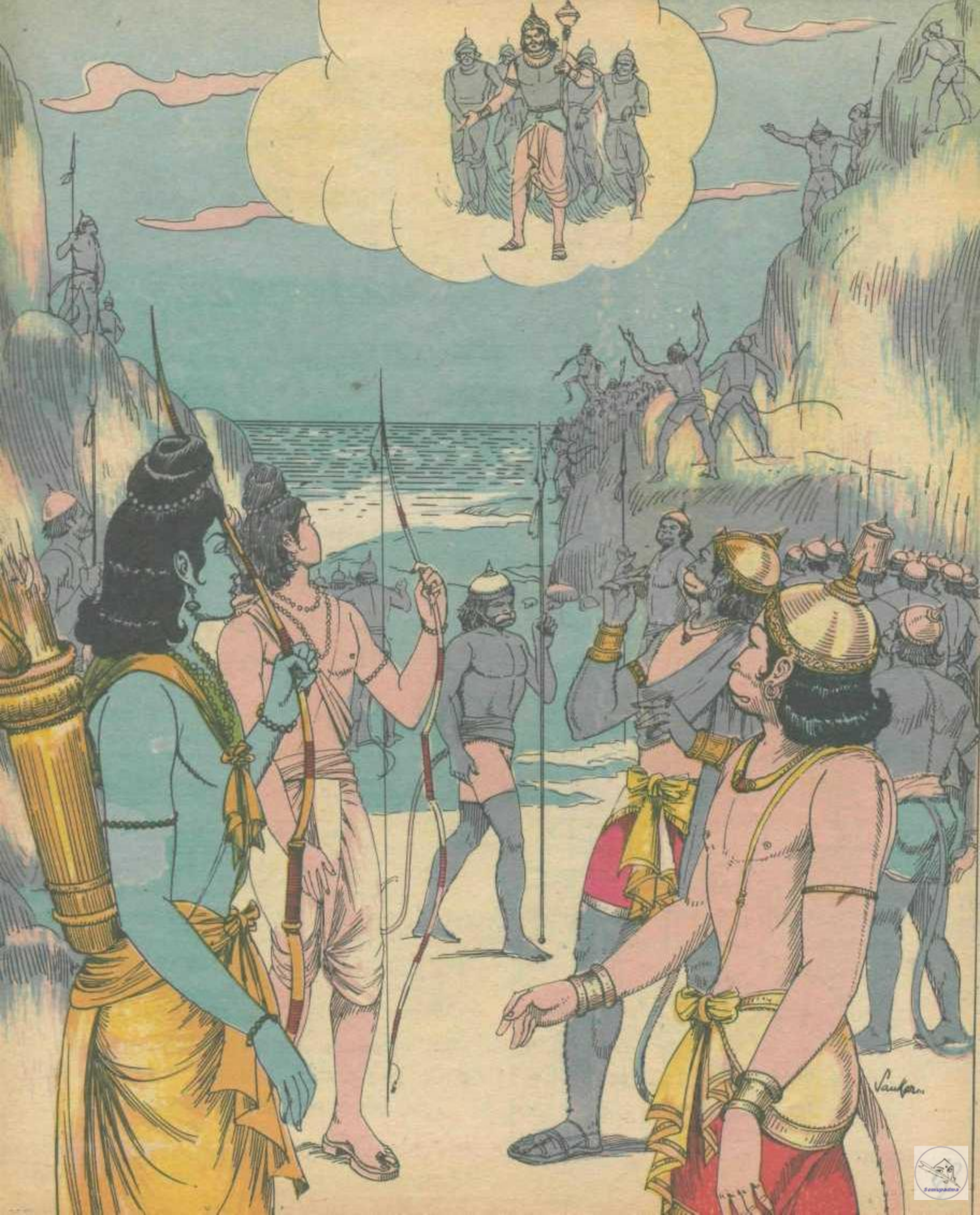
After listening to Sugriva, Rama looked at Jambavan, Angada, and Hanuman and said, "You've all heard Sugriva. What do you think? Let each one of you express your views."

"Whoever they are, we should not blindly believe them, as they come from the enemy's side," opined Angada. "Maybe this is a clever ruse by Ravana. We should get more details from Vibhishana."

"I'm almost certain that they've come to test our strength," said Jambavan.

"Let's question them about Ravana and Lanka," said Mainthan, "their answers might reveal some details and secrets."

"Just because they're from the





enemy's side does not mean that we should suspect them," said Hanuman. "Vibhishana may be a gentleman. Because of certain circumstances, he has come to us. According to him, he tried to advise Ravana and had told him of your invincibility. And what did he receive in return? Only abuses and rebuke. He couldn't bear such insults anymore and decided to come here, seeking

our protection. Let's believe him and trust him. Just as you killed Bali and handed over the kingdom to Sugriva, you may also hand over Lanka to Vibhishana after Ravana is killed. He is confident that you'll give him protection and will not discard him. I feel it'll be advantageous to accept him."

— To continue



PROMPT ACTION

Officer : An old lady was robbed on the square, day before yesterday. A little boy was robbed on that very spot yesterday. Could you trace anyone?

The Policeman : Yes, sir, I have traced both, the old lady as well as the little boy.

Reward for Courage

The villagers of Kottur could not believe their ears. Kandaswamy had come back after spending a whole day and night in the jungle at the outskirts of the village. They praised his courage, and the zamindar of the village even thought of rewarding him in public. He sent for Kandaswamy.

When the servant reached Kandaswamy's house, only his wife was present. The servant told her why the zamindar wished to meet him. "A reward?" she was evidently surprised. "It should go to me, really. He lost all his earnings while gambling and came back penniless. I drove him away, asking him not to come here with an empty pocket. That's how he went and hid in the jungle. I think he has now gone in search of work. Maybe he'll be back at night. Go and tell the zamindar, it is I who deserve the reward, not my husband."

The servant conveyed to his master what Kandaswamy's wife had narrated. He laughed aloud. "She's right. She had enough courage to send him to the jungle."





Dilemma from dates

Some years ago lived Santhanam, a wealthy landowner in Malika-pur. He was a miser. One day, on his way back home after visiting some merchants in the town, he came upon a palm full of ripe dates. As he loved dates, he wondered how he could get the fruits ready for plucking from the tree. It was a rather tall tree, and he could not possibly aim stones to the top. There was no alternative to climbing, but he was not adept at climbing trees. However, so greedy was he to reach the dates that he at last decided to climb the tree.

He started carefully and cautiously lest he fell down and broke his legs. Somehow he managed to reach the top and while he rested there, he ate the dates to his relish. It was then that he remembered he had to climb down, too. As he looked down, and shuddered at the thought of sliding

to the ground from that height, his head began to reel and he could not fathom the distance to the ground.

But climb down, he must. How? He tried this way and that and feared that he would lose his grip once he left the top of the palm. He prayed to his family deity and promised to feed a hundred brahmins as advised in scriptures if the Lord helped him come down safely. He then mustered enough courage and began climbing down. He avoided looking at the ground for a while, and when he opened his eyes, he found that he had hardly a few feet to touch the ground.

He felt ashamed of himself for having harboured a fear unnecessarily. As he continued his walk home, he wondered whether his effort really deserved feeding a hundred brahmins. 'It was so easy! Why should I waste that much money? It



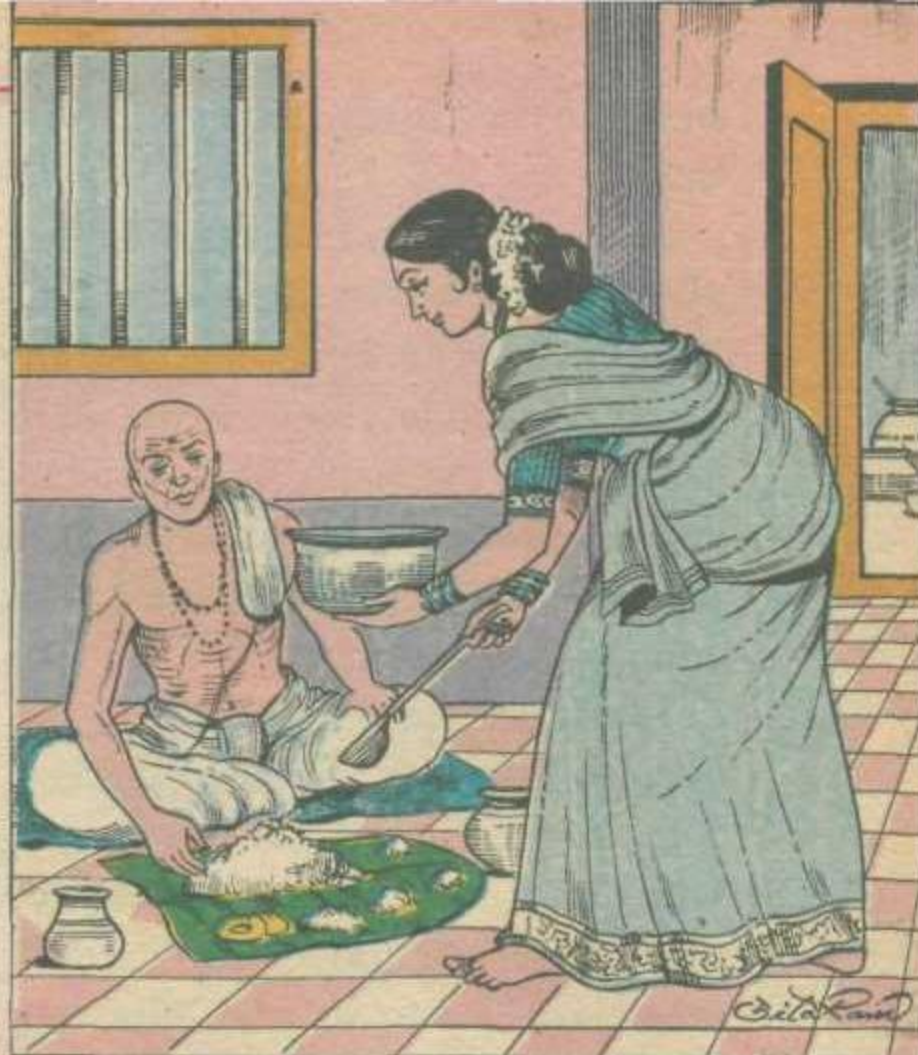
will be enough if I gave food to just one brahmin. It will have the effect of feeding a hundred of them!" he contended.

Before going home, he went up to the temple and met the priest, Venkatachari. "Swami, please have your meal tomorrow at my place," he said politely.

The priest thought something strange must have happened to Santhanam, from whom he had never received more than a rupee whenever he distributed *prasad* after the *aarti*. 'What a sea change! He's now inviting me to a meal at his place! There must be some secret behind it.' However, he did not want to miss a square meal and so readily accepted the invitation.

Santhanam told his wife how he happened to ask the temple priest to come home for a meal. "I haven't completed my work in the town where I might have to go again tomorrow. So, I won't be here when Venkatachari comes. It doesn't matter. You don't have to make anything elaborate. Rice and one dish will be sufficient. You may also prepare some sweet dish. Nothing more. Let him eat that and go."

Next morning, Santhanam left for the town as usual. When Venkat-



achari arrived, his wife received him and apologised on behalf of her husband. "He may come back only late in the evening. Before he left, he gave me all instructions about you. The meal is ready and I shall serve as soon as you wash your hands and feet and take your seat."

The meal was simple, but Venkatachari enjoyed it as it was a welcome change from the food that he ate everyday. When he got up, Santhanam's wife brought a salver containing betel leaf and arecanut. "Only *tambulam*? Hasn't your husband left any cash offering for me? A *dakshina* is a must when you invite a



brahmin for a meal, don't you know that?"

As Santhanam had not told her about any *dakshina* she was in a dilemma. She went inside and brought two coins and left them on the plate along with the betel leaf. Venkatachari frowned when he saw it was just two rupees. But he pocketed the coins and departed.

When Santhanam returned in the evening, his wife told him all about Venkatachari's visit. He was furious with her because she had given him money over and above a full meal. "I never asked you to give him any *dakshina*. You shouldn't have been so munificent! I shall not let him off so easily!" He then set out, a staff in hand, in a threatening pace.

Venkatachari had cleverly anticipated a visit from Santhanam. So, he feigned illness and lay down on a cot. His wife sat by his side, weep-

ing. Santhanam brushed aside the priest's son and rushed inside. "What have you done to my husband?" wailed Venkatachari's wife. "You invite him and what do you give? Poison? The doctor has just left after giving him an antidote. And I've already informed our neighbours."

Santhanam was really taken aback. If the people were to see him there, they would sure take him to task. "Don't worry, I shall take care of everything," he tried to pacify her. "Here's some money to pay the doctor. If you want more, don't hesitate to send your son." He gave her twenty rupees and came out. "Thank god, no one seems to have seen me coming!" he murmured to himself.

He never forgave himself for having taken a fancy for dates and also climbed the palm.



Orders are Orders

Shankar was the royal cook in the palace of King Arjun Singh. He took pride in the fact that he cooked food for the king and nobody else in the palace, including the queen. Everyone knew the exclusive position he had in the royal kitchen.

One day, Queen Aishwarya sent for him. "My brother is here and will be dining with the king. You must prepare additional food for him as well."

Shankar reminded her that he was expected to prepare food only for the king. The queen felt insulted and promptly complained about him to the king.

Shankar was called to the presence of the king, who asked for an explanation. "It's true that I told Her Majesty, I would cook food only for you."

"All right," said the king. "Suppose I pay you a hundred more coins? Will you then cook food for my brother-in-law, too?"

"Why not?" said Shankar.

"But a while ago you were adamant," the king reminded him. "What has made you change your attitude when I offered extra money?"

"Your Majesty," replied Shankar, "it'll then be your command, and I shall only be obeying your orders. If I refuse, it'll be a slur on your authority."

King Arjun Singh was satisfied with his answer. He gave Shankar two hundred coins.





THE FOUR POETS

Chandra, Sekhar, and Siva were three poets of Mathura. They were friends. Chander was not religious and avoided going to temples; Sekhar was very pious and, given a chance, would visit every temple. Siva had belief in god, but would seldom go to temples, because that would mean some expenditure. He was miserly by nature.

Paramvir was their friend, who would meet them whenever he returned from his travels. He was more worldly and the three poets liked his company and waited for his arrival to know more about what was happening elsewhere in the land. Paramvir, on the other hand, would want to know of their literary pursuits. As they would read out and discuss their compositions amongst themselves, not many people knew about their accomplishments and

never came to listen to their recitations.

Because of his interest in the three poets and their poems, Paramvir began attempting some compositions himself, much to the pleasure of his poet friends. One day, he brought the news that a wealthy person in the city was offering a prize of one thousand rupees for a collection of good poems.

The man was flooded with poems from all and sundry, claiming themselves to be either budding poets, or popular writers. Finally, he selected the poems from five poets and felicitated them in public and gave them rewards. One of the five was Paramvir.

His three friends were naturally jealous. After all, he started writing poems only recently, while they had spent all their time and all the years

composing poems. Yet, their writings could not win a single prize. Paramvir found some sudden change in their behaviour towards him and decided it was time he pointed out their weaknesses.

He first called on Chander. "You've been an atheist, my good friend. You must discard that attitude and start having faith in god. Only His blessings will help you progress in life," he advised Chander.

To Sekhar he said, "Mere belief in god will not take you far. You can't leave everything to Him. You must make some efforts yourself. You should not have found fault with those who won prizes. You

should have given them some respect, some reverence."

His approach to Siva was different. Paramvir knew he was a miser. "You should have invited more people home, on more occasions, recited your poems to them, so that they became popular. The judges would have been among your admirers and they would not have found it difficult to recommend your poems. You've missed a golden opportunity."

But contrary to his expectations, he found them the same even after his advice and suggestions. When the three gathered together, they would not seek his company. So, he had to visit them independently, as





he wanted to be friendly to them.

Chander would tell him, "God was kind to you; that's how you got a prize. But I don't believe in god. It's He who is responsible for good and evil in men. I don't want His grace. He was partial to you. He could also have helped me. But He didn't. I shall try to win a prize by my own efforts."

Paramvir had some hope in Sekhar and thought that he might have changed. No. "Param, I happened to read your poems," said Sekhar. "I can't agree with your advice that I should revere such poets who write

rotten stuff. I feel ashamed even to call them poets!"

Siva had some angry remarks. "I never imagined sincere efforts would fail to get recognition. No poet with self-respect would indulge in publicity. I know why I didn't win a prize. I'm not in favour of any shortcuts."

Paramvir was certain that his attempts to reform them had failed. They refused to appreciate good attempts by other poets and would prefer to offer praises mutually. He then decided to leave their company and forget their friendship.

He who would gather honey must bear the sting of the bees.

Lightning does not strike twice in the same place.



LET US KNOW

Which is the smallest state in the world, by size?

— M.Pradeep Bhat, Mangalore

The Vatican City, with an area of 109 acres, within the city of Rome, is the smallest independent sovereign state in the world. It is the seat of the Pope, and the present Pope John Paul II is the head of state as well as of government since 1978. It was given independent status in 1929, which was later confirmed in the new Constitution of post-War Italy in 1947.

Which countries form the group called the U.A.E.?

— Lalitha Srinivasan, Bombay

The United Arab Emirates is a Federation of seven sheikhdoms on the Arabian side of the Persian Gulf. They are Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ras al Khaimah, Ajman, Fujairah, and Umman al Quawain. Once a region of not so well defined boundaries, the rulers there signed a treaty with Britain in 1820. In 1892 the states became British protectorates and were called the Trucial States. The U.A.E. was constituted in 1971.

What will be the influence of the Soviet break-up on other countries?

— Prakash Kumar Madhu, Mayurbhanj

Of the 15 republics, the three Baltic states of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia declared independence first and were recognised as such and admitted to the United Nations last September (see Chandamama, November 1991). The other 12 republics have formed a Commonwealth of Independent States (see Chandamama, March 1992) and, for the time being, will be represented in the U.N. by the Russian Federation, in the place of the former Soviet Union. These republics independently and jointly have re-established diplomatic relations with other countries of the world, which indicates that the transition in the erstwhile U.S.S.R. has been smooth. It is now left to the individual countries to sort out their problems with the republics, though much will depend on peace that the countries expect to prevail among the constituents of the C.I.S.

PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



M. Natarajan



M. Natarajan

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The world is a comedy to those that think, a tragedy to those that feel.

- *Horace Walpole*

There never was a good war or a bad peace.

- *Franklin*

Hypocrisy is the homage which the vice pay to virtue.

- *La Rochie Foucauld*

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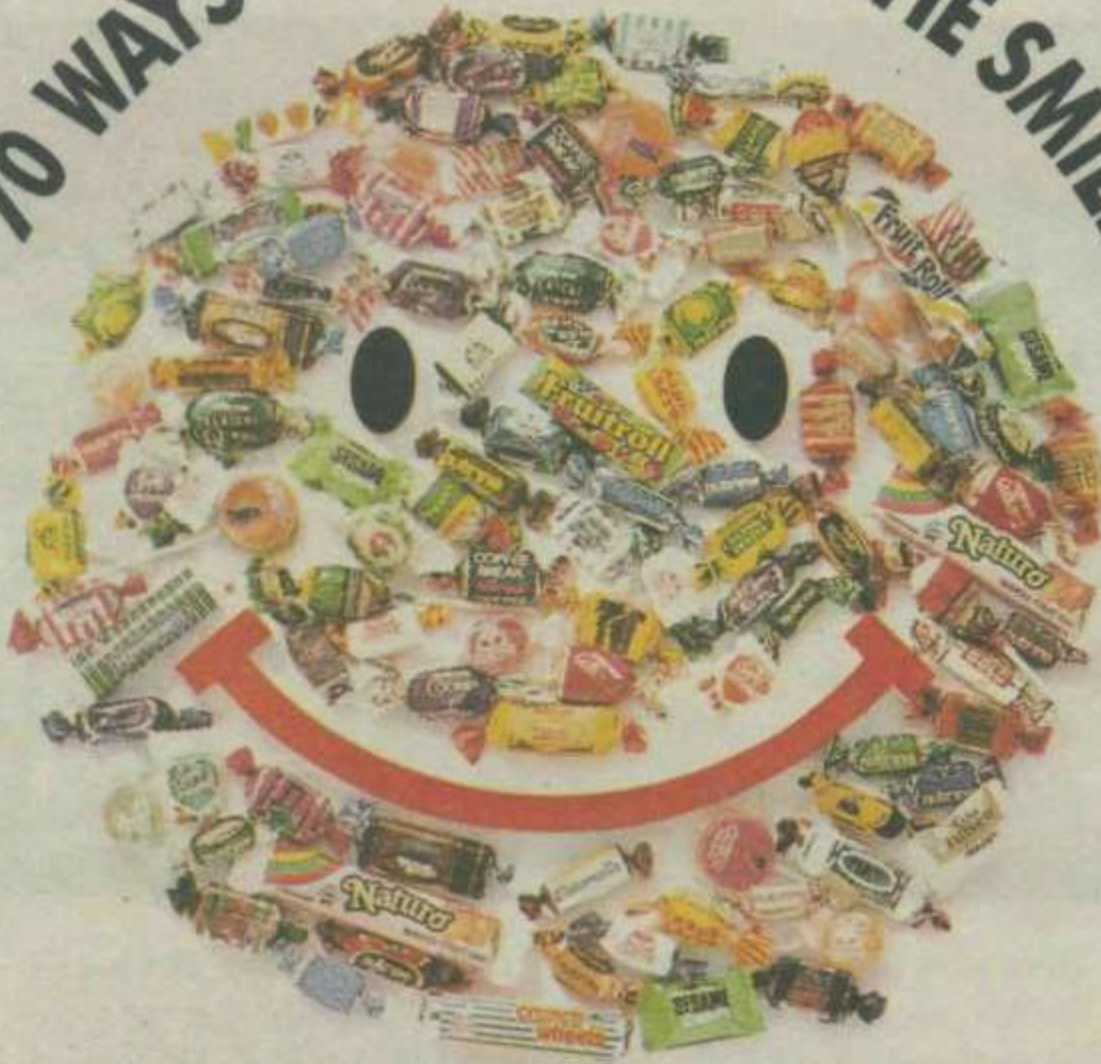
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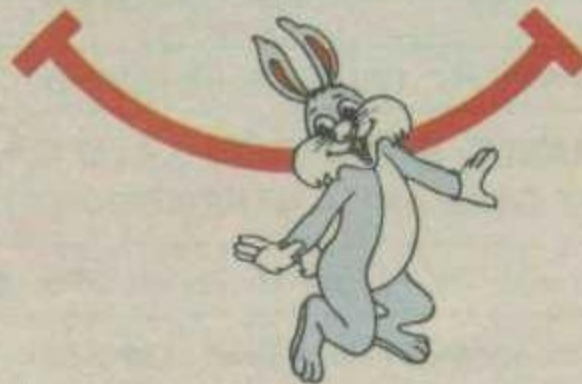
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